HT302 **WATERCOLOR**

HOW TO DRAW & PAINT

Walter Foster

Florals & Botanicals

Learn to paint step by step



Capturing brilliant whites ▪ Creating a floral landscape
Mixing luminous colors ▪ Setting up a still life

WITH BARBARA FUDURICH, JOAN HANSEN, CAROLINE LINSCOTT, AND GERI MEDWAY



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Florals & Botanicals

The natural splendor of flowers and botanicals makes them irresistible subjects for artistic expression—and watercolor is the perfect medium for painting a delightful range of floral shapes, colors and textures. Watercolor can be applied opaquely or translucently, and you can layer colors to achieve depth and intensity. You also can create a variety of special effects using simple household items, such as salt, sponges, and tissues. In this book, you will learn about the anatomy of a flower and its basic shapes, how to set up attractive floral arrangements, and how to use form, value, and color to render amazingly lifelike flowers. You also will discover the exciting properties of watercolor and learn how to paint an array of flowers—from delicate orchids to bold birds of paradise—that will inspire you to capture your own floral scenes!

CONTENTS



Purchasing Tools and Materials

WITH THE AMAZING SELECTION of paints, brushes, papers, and other materials available, every visit to the art supply store is an adventure full of excitement and possibilities. Instead of picking out one of everything, refer to the suggested supply list in the box at right. You can purchase a limited number of supplies, but always invest in the best you can afford. You always can buy additional materials as you develop your skills and personal painting style. If you'd like to learn more about watercolor tools and materials, refer to *Watercolor & Acrylic Painting Materials* by William F. Powell in Walter Foster's Artist's Library series.

Checking Your Supply List

Here's a list of the basic supplies you'll need to get started painting with watercolor. (For specifics, refer to the suggested brushes and colors shown below.)

- ❑ Five paintbrushes
- ❑ Ten watercolor paints
- ❑ Watercolor paper
- ❑ Mixing palette
- ❑ Drawing board or easel
- ❑ At least two water containers—one for rinsing brushes and one for clean water

Buying Paints

Watercolor paints are available in tubes, pans, and cakes. Most artists choose tube watercolors because they are already moist, which makes them easy to use, and they allow you to squeeze out a large amount of color quickly and easily. Pan and cake paints, however, are small and light, which makes them convenient for travel. Whichever type you choose, be sure to select artist-grade paints. Student-grade paints are mixed with more fillers and additives, which decrease the intensity of the colors—and your painting. Artist-grade paints are made with purer pigments, so the colors are truer and richer.



◄ **PAN PAINTS** Pan or cake paints are typically stored in a watercolor box, which doubles as a mixing palette. To use, moisten the block with a wet brush and scrub the pigment loose.

► **STARTING OUT** Each artist develops his or her own favorite palette of colors—and you will too. The basic palette at right will get you started.



Choosing Colors

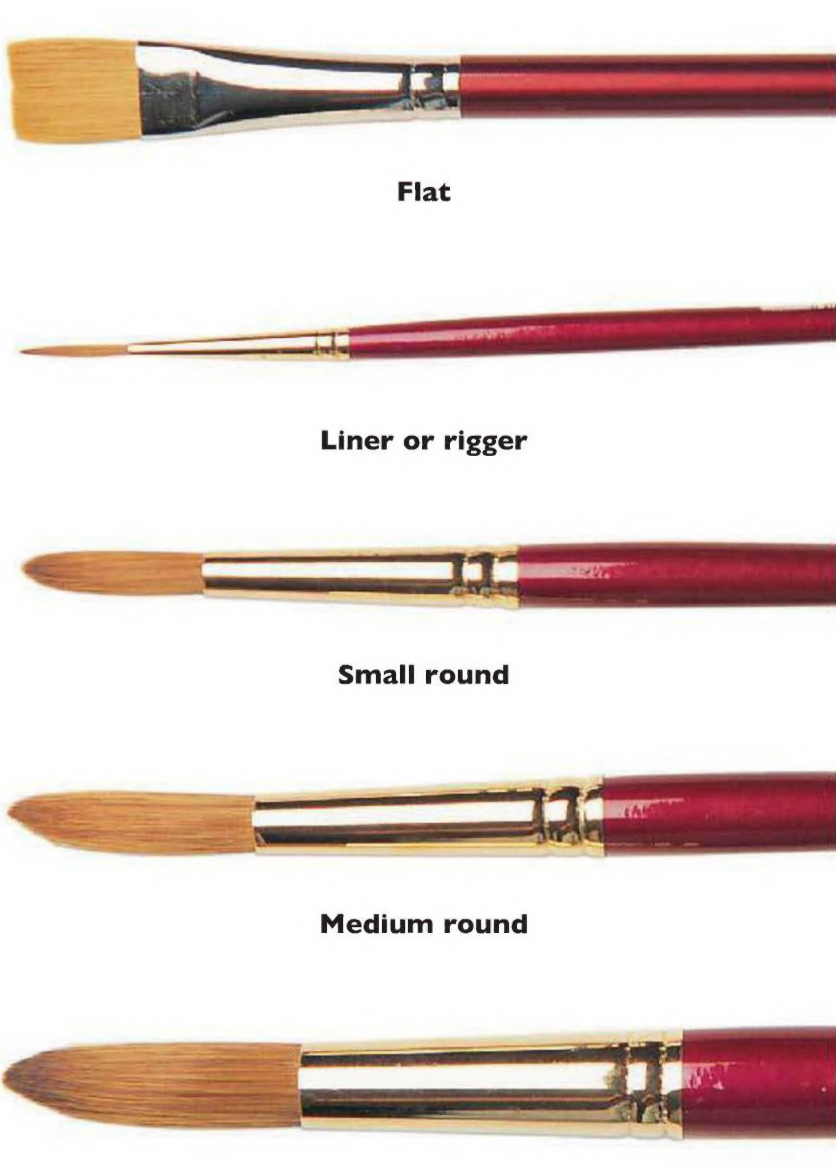
A beginner's color palette doesn't have to be extensive. In theory, all an artist really needs are the three primaries: red, yellow, and blue. But in practice, it's more convenient and practical to select a small array of colors. Even with a minimal set, or *limited palette,* like the one shown above right, you'll be able to mix just about any color you may need.

▼ **CHOOSING PAINTS** Lightfast paint retains its color after being exposed to light over time. Colors rated I (excellent) or II (very good) will last the longest. Pigments with low ratings are sometimes referred to as *fugitive* colors because they fade over time. If you don't see the rating on the tube, ask your art supply store for an information sheet from the manufacturer.

Looking at Brushes

Watercolor brushes are categorized by size, shape, and hair type. Brush size is indicated either in inches or by a number, but the numbering system varies among the different brands. For example, although a #2 brush is usually very small, the length and width of the bristles may differ slightly from manufacturer to manufacturer. In this book, brushes are referred to as small, medium, or large, so choose the sizes that fit your subjects. Brush shapes determine the type of strokes you create—rounds will yield a narrower line than flats will. Hair types are either natural or synthetic; both will do the job, but natural hairs generally cost more. For beginners, the five brushes shown at right make a good starter set.

► **DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN BRUSHES** There are many styles of brushes, each with its own function. For instance, a flexible flat brush is invaluable for painting thick, even bands of color; the firm point of a small round brush is ideal for detail work; and a liner or rigger brush is great for painting very fine lines.





MASKING WITH FRISKET Liquid frisket, or *masking fluid,* is a latex-based substance that is either white or slightly colored. (Colored mask is easier to see on white paper.) Paper frisket is a clear adhesive that you cut with scissors or a utility knife and adhere to the painting surface. When applied, frisket will protect the paper from absorbing pigment, saving the white areas you cover.



Simplifying Supports

You can paint on many different surfaces, or *supports,* such as illustration board or Bristol board, but most watercolorists prefer paper. Watercolor paper varies by weight and texture: *Hot-press* paper is smooth, whereas *cold-press* paper has some texture. Paper also is categorized by weight, designated in pounds; the higher the number, the heavier the paper. Medium-weight 140-lb paper is popular and suitable for beginners, but a heavier paper, such as 260-lb or 300-lb, won't buckle under multiple layers of wet paint.

Picking a Palette

Mixing palettes are available in glass, ceramic, plastic, and metal. All are easy to clean, but glass and ceramic palettes are heavier and usually more expensive. Palettes also come in many shapes, but they all contain individual color wells and at least one area for mixing.



CREATING A WORK SPACE To set up an effective work station, keep three things in mind: convenience, lighting, and comfort. Try to place all your materials within easy reach, and make sure you have adequate lighting. Natural light is best, but you'll also need artificial light for working at night or on overcast days. Finally, be sure to include a comfortable chair; it will make your painting sessions more pleasant.

Getting to Know Your "Extras"

You'll also want to assemble a few extra supplies. A sketchpad, pencil, and eraser are great for making quick sketches of your subject on location and blocking in compositions. It's also helpful to have an easel or drawing board with a smooth surface that can be tilted or adjusted. A toothbrush, salt, plastic wrap, sponges, and tissues are also good for creating a variety of special effects. Artist's tape or masking fluid (*frisket*) is useful for saving the white of the paper, whereas a craft knife can be used to retrieve whites or light values. Keep a spray bottle or mister around to moisten your paints or your paper, and use a hair dryer to speed up the drying time. For convenient clean-up, keep rags or paper towels on hand, along with an extra container of water for rinsing your brushes.



SELECTING A STYLE Whether you choose a round-, oval-, rectangular-, or square-shaped palette, choose one with plenty of wells to hold all your paint colors. And look for a palette with a flat area that's spacious enough to accommodate large puddles for washes.



SUPPLEMENTING THE ESSENTIALS You don't have to spend a lot of money on fancy tools. Many extras you probably already have in your kitchen or bathroom cabinet. Others are readily available at the drugstore or supermarket.

Expanding Your Color Palette

For the lessons in this book, you'll need to add the colors listed below to your basic palette. Refer to each project for a complete listing of colors needed.

- ❑ aureolin yellow
- ❑ burnt umber
- ❑ burnt sienna
- ❑ cadmium orange
- ❑ cadmium red
- ❑ cadmium red medium
- ❑ cadmium scarlet
- ❑ cadmium yellow
- ❑ cadmium yellow light
- ❑ cadmium yellow pale
- ❑ cobalt blue
- ❑ cobalt turquoise
- ❑ dioxazine purple
- ❑ indigo blue
- ❑ manganese blue
- ❑ mineral violet
- ❑ permanent magenta
- ❑ permanent rose
- ❑ phthalo blue
- ❑ phthalo green
- ❑ raw sienna
- ❑ quinacridone burnt orange
- ❑ quinacridone gold
- ❑ sap green
- ❑ vermilion
- ❑ white gouache

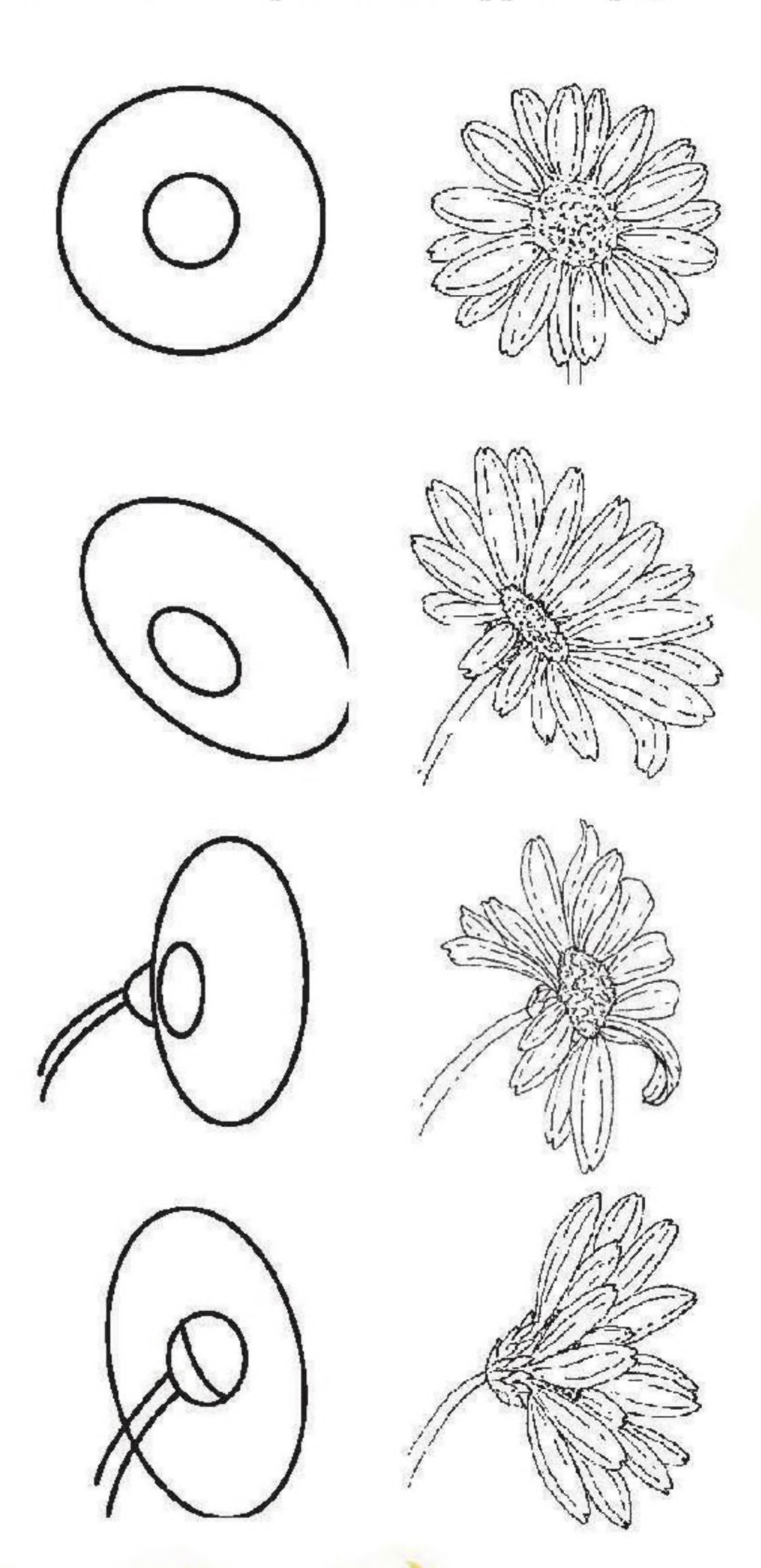
Beginning with the Basics

with Joan Hansen

IMAGINE WALKING down a garden path and gazing at a mass of brilliant color and sunlight glistening on beautiful flowers in bloom. As the fragrance fills the air, you wonder how you can make this moment last forever. By painting a floral image in watercolor! Once you've learned to see the basic shapes of a flower, you'll be able to draw and paint any flower you like.

Focusing on Shapes

Every flower, leaf, and stem can be broken down into a few basic shapes: circles, rectangles, squares, and triangles. To draw any flower's shape, I simply draw the petals' outlines within those basic shapes, as I did with the circular daisy shown below. And I keep in mind that all the petals always radiate from the center. As I paint, I overlap and curve some of the petals, so they don't all look exactly the same. These little tricks make my flowers look lifelike and three-dimensional, as you can see in the examples on the opposite page.



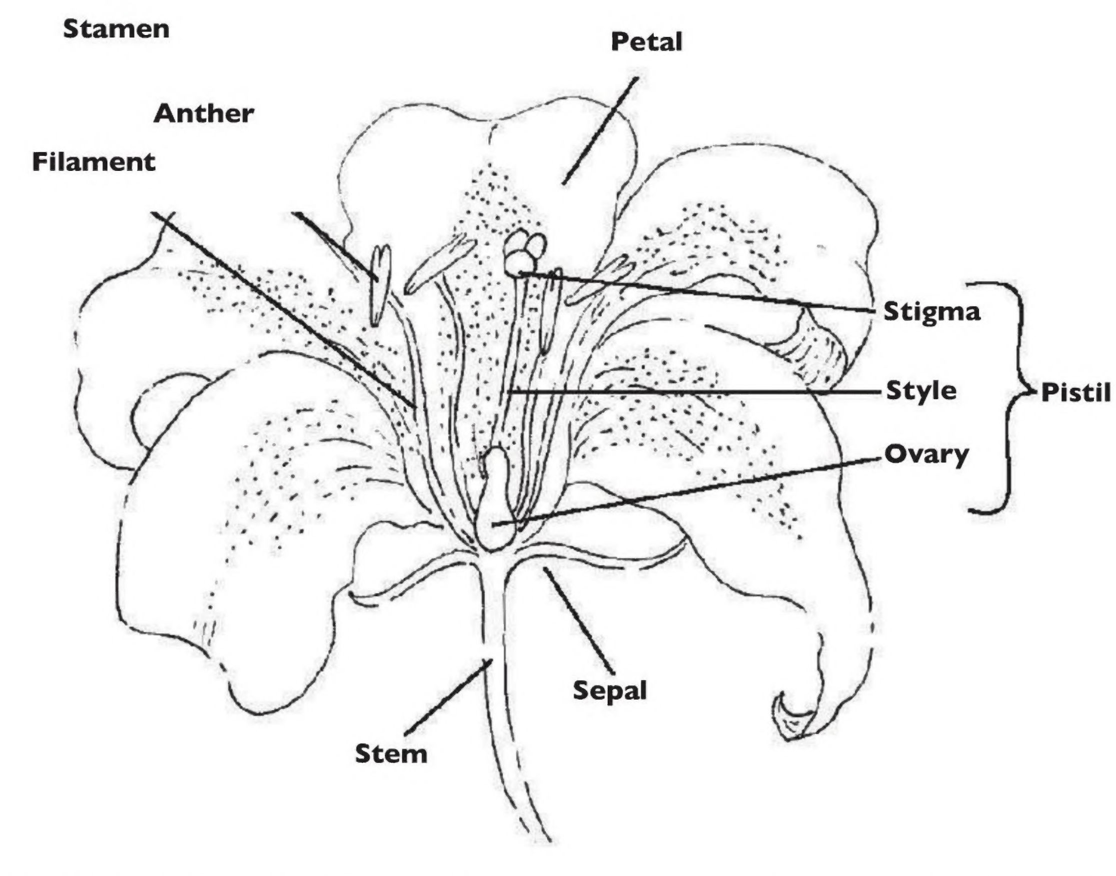
FRONT VIEW Practice drawing a daisy from different angles to learn to see the basic shapes and the way those shapes change as your viewpoint changes. When you look directly at the daisy, you can see a small circle within a larger one.

ANGLED VIEW As you turn the flower away from you, the circles become elliptical. Notice that the petals in front look shorter than the others. This is an example of *foreshortening*—a distortion made to help convey the illusion of depth.

THREE-QUARTER VIEW From this angle, the petals on the left side are even more foreshortened, and the petals on the right curve away from view. The shapes are still ovals, and the inner oval is dramatically off-center.

SIDE VIEW When you look at the daisy in profile, you can see the cup-shaped base of the sepal, and the petals are again of nearly equal size. Notice too how the overlapping petals and irregular spaces help make the drawing look realistic.

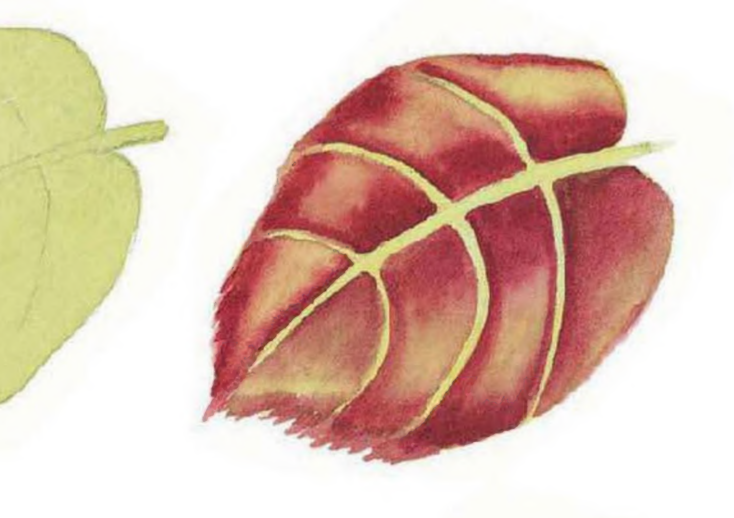
DEVELOPING STEMS Stems are essentially yellow-green cylinders. I start with a very diluted layer—a *wash*—of cadmium yellow. While it is still wet, I paint cerulean blue in the center of the stem. Then I add another layer of phthalo green mixed with a touch of burnt sienna to the center of the second wash. These layers help create the illusion of roundness (see more about form on page 8).

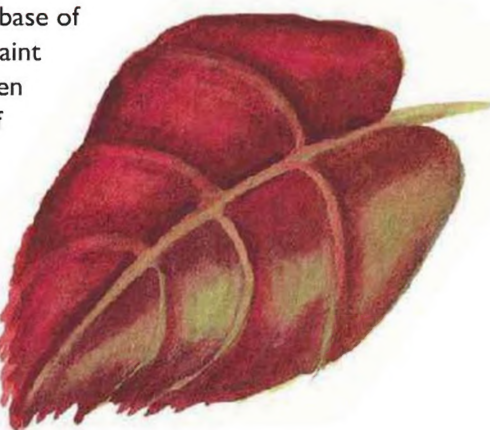


ANATOMY OF A FLOWER You don't need to memorize all the parts of a flower in order to paint it, but it helps to know a little of its anatomy. The diagram above shows a cross-section of a typical flower and the major elements, demonstrating that all the parts branch out from the center.



PAINTING A CURLED LEAF First I draw the triangular shape with a pencil; next I wet the shape with clear water and apply a light value of yellow-green to the wet area (called "charging in" color). This is a reddish rose leaf, curled so the green underside is on top. I mix a burnt red color using burnt sienna, permanent magenta, and permanent rose to paint along the veins in the leaf. When dry, I place more red at the bottom of the leaf (the other side of the leaf) and soften it with clear water. I paint a darker value of the red along the top edge of the leaf, rinse the brush, and then brush the color out to the edge with clear water.





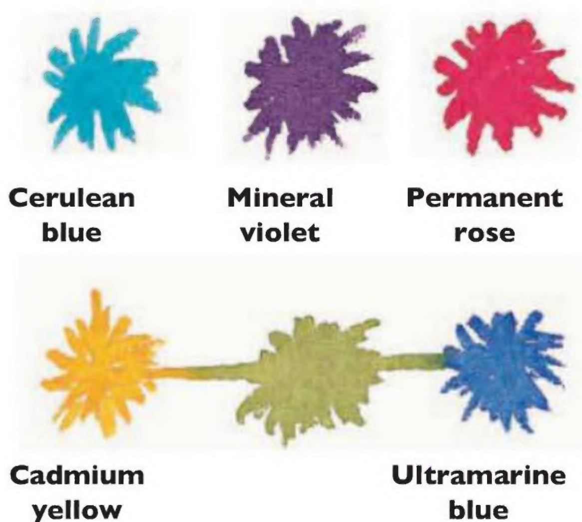
PAINTING A FLAT LEAF Again, I start with a base of yellow-green, but this is the top of the leaf, so I will paint over it with red. When dry, I wet the area between each vein with clear water. Then I add a dark value of burnt red at the center vein and the outer edges of the leaf, and I blend it with clear water to reveal some of the yellow-green base. When the red dries, I paint a light layer of permanent rose over the upper side of the leaf and the veins, leaving the lower section highlighted to show where the light strikes.







PETUNIA



PETUNIA After drawing the cone-shaped flower, I paint a light graduated wash (dark at one edge and lightening gradually) of mineral violet on the underside of the curled petals. When dry, I wet the top of every other petal. Then I add cerulean blue and mineral violet, lifting out highlights with a clean, damp brush.

When the first petals are dry, I paint the remainder and let them dry. Then I paint the stamen with a yellow-green mix of cadmium yellow and cerulean blue. Next I apply cobalt blue and mineral violet to deepen the value around the stamen, washing over the edge with clear water to soften it.

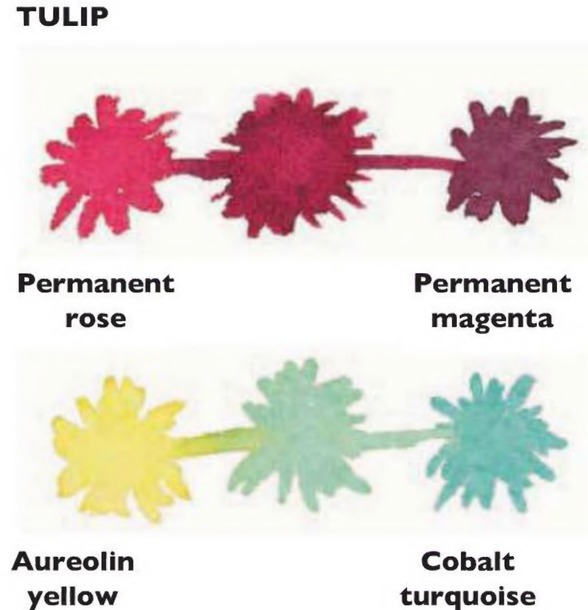
I add a little permanent rose to the curled edges of the petals for more variety. Then I paint the stem and leaves with different values of yellow-green (mixes of cadmium yellow and ultramarine blue). After the leaves are dry, I wash on a little yellow on the sunlit part of the leaves for highlights.







TULIP



TULIP For the cup-shaped tulip, I start with a light wash of permanent rose on the outer petals. I apply a darker value of permanent rose to the folds, softening the edges with water. Then I add cadmium scarlet to the outside edges, rinse the brush, and stroke along the petal, curving the lines to follow the shape. When dry, I add permanent rose along the vein and soften it with clear water.

For the inside petals, I apply a deeper value of permanent rose from the bottom of the petal to the top, adding more water as I go to create a graduated wash. Then again I add cadmium scarlet along the outer edges, rinse the brush, and stroke along the petal, following its shape. When all the petals are dry, I stroke a very light wash of permanent rose along the center veins.

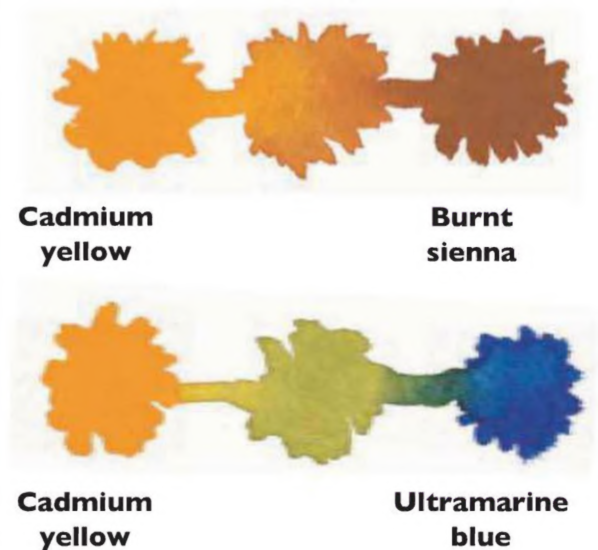
I paint the stems and leaves with mixtures of yellow-green and blue-green, as shown at right. When everything is finished, I study the flower. I decide to add permanent magenta to the base of the inside petals to create a larger value change; that helps "push" the outer petals forward. I also add a light wash of permanent rose to the right petal to improve its overall shape.







SUNFLOWER



SUNFLOWER The sunflower has a circular shape. I paint the first group of petals with pure cadmium yellow and cadmium yellow mixed with raw sienna. After the petal shapes are dry, I paint the folds with the darker yellow mixture. If there isn't enough contrast, I add a touch of burnt sienna to the mix. To soften the lines, I paint over them with clear water while the color is still wet.

Next I wet the center of the flower and charge in green-yellow and burnished orange mixtures, letting them blend on the paper. While the surface is still wet, I use a #2 round brush to dab in spots of yellows, oranges, browns, and blues to give the center texture. For the spots, I use more pigment on the brush, and I touch it on the paper towel to make it a little drier before applying the color.

For the leaves, I paint a pale wash of cerulean blue as an undercoat. While the paint is still wet, I charge in cadmium yellow and then allow it to dry. Using a darker value of blue-green, I paint the area between the veins (applying the color to the dry leaf) and then wash over it with clear water. This technique uncovers some of the first layer of color. Then I add the finishing touches to the flower center.

Mastering Basic Techniques

with Joan Hansen

WATERCOLOR IS A PERFECT medium for experimenting with different painting techniques. You don't need special tools or additives, and you can practice on any piece of scratch paper you have on hand. But the best part is the added personality your paintings will have when you have mastered a few simple watercolor techniques.

Covering the Basics

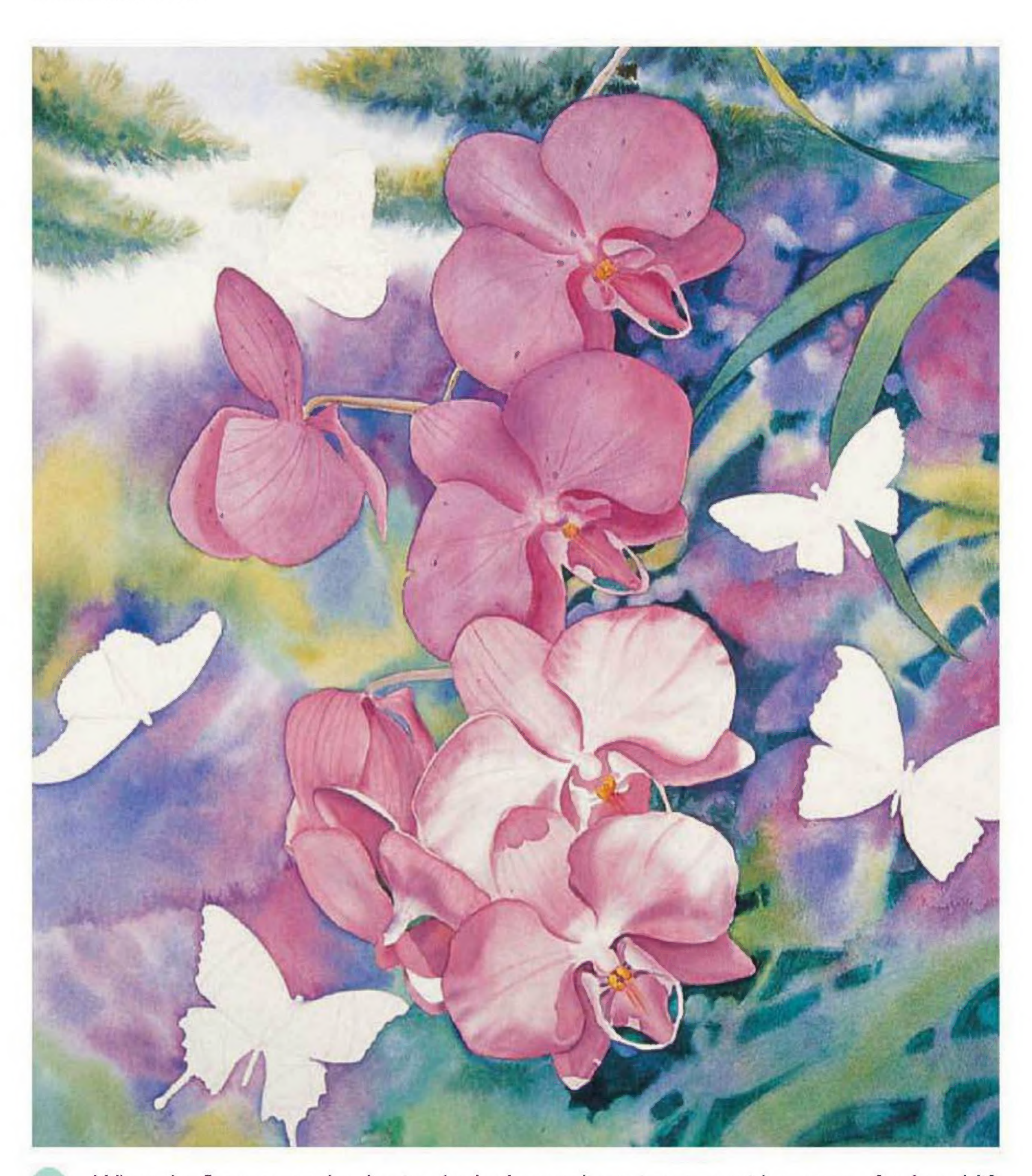
In the examples on these pages, I present detailed explanations of a few basic techniques—such as painting onto wet paper, applying transparent glazes of color, making graduated washes, and using stencils. As you can see, I combined all these painting methods to give my orchids and butterflies painting a little more interest—and because they're a lot of fun to do! When you create your own paintings, refer to the examples here to refresh your memory—and freshen up your watercolor florals.



2 I paint the leaves with mixtures of cobalt turquoise, aureolin yellow, phthalo blue, and burnt sienna in a graduated wash. Then I wet the upper one-third of the paper and paint the sky with a mixture of cerulean blue and cobalt blue. While the paint is still wet, I lift out some clouds with a moist facial tissue.



1 First I mask off the spots on the wings of the monarch butterfly. (I painted around the butterfly shapes themselves, but you may prefer to mask them off completely. If so, remove the dry masking in step 4, and mask the monarch's spots before painting the wings.) Then I wet the petal areas and brush in light values of permanent rose to establish the basic flower shapes. When dry, I add a darker value of dusty rose (see the color swatches on page 7) for the cast shadows and dark areas of the petals. To soften the transition between values, I paint in the dark values and wash the edges with clear water.



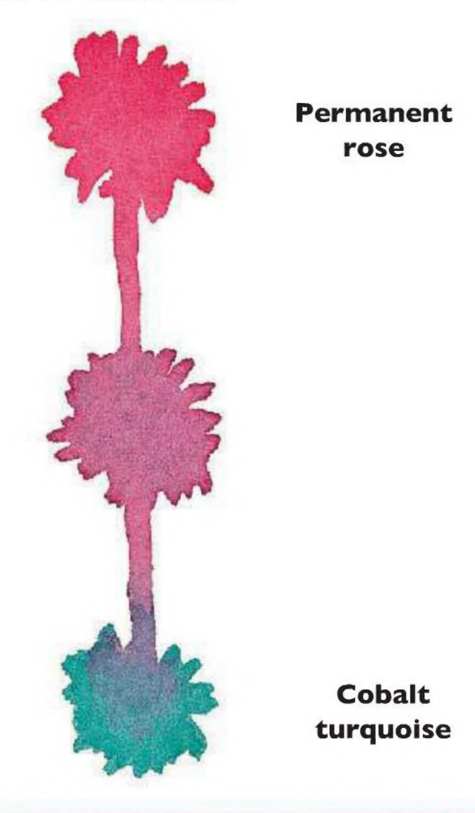
3 When the flowers are dry, I paint the background wet into wet with a range of colors. I lift some color from the upper left corner and finish adding the medium values to the background. Then, with a very dark mix of phthalo blue and phthalo green, I paint dark shapes with one brush, softening the edges with another brush and clear water.

Color Palette

aureolin yellow, burnt sienna, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, permanent rose, phthalo blue, phthalo green

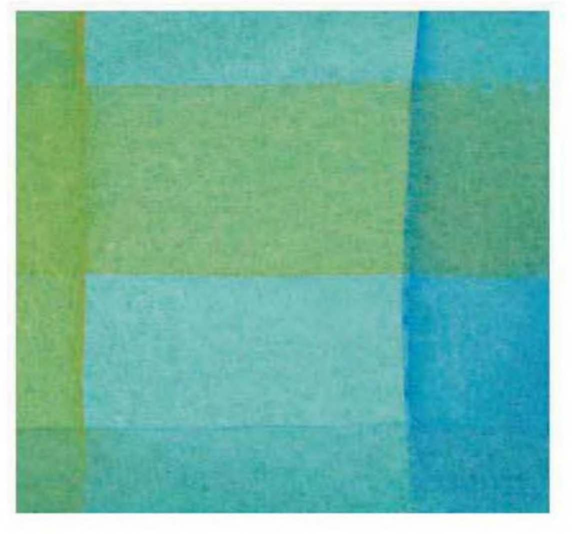
4 For the butterflies, I paint the underlying colors first, shade with deeper values, and then wash over them with clear water. I paint the black last, after the colors have dried.

DUSTY ROSE MIX

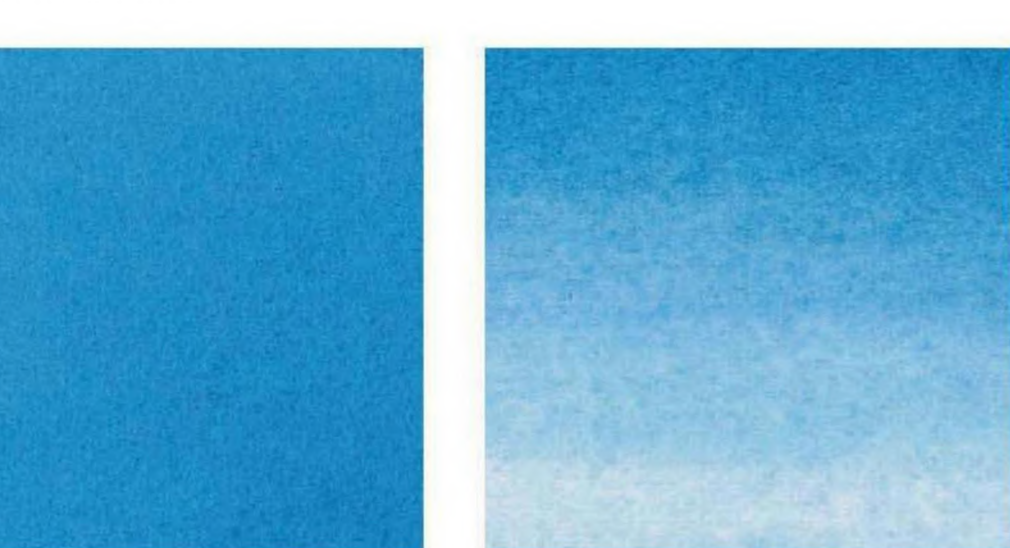




STENCILING Place a stencil over dry paint. Loosen the color inside the shape with a damp brush, and lift off the color with a clean facial tissue.



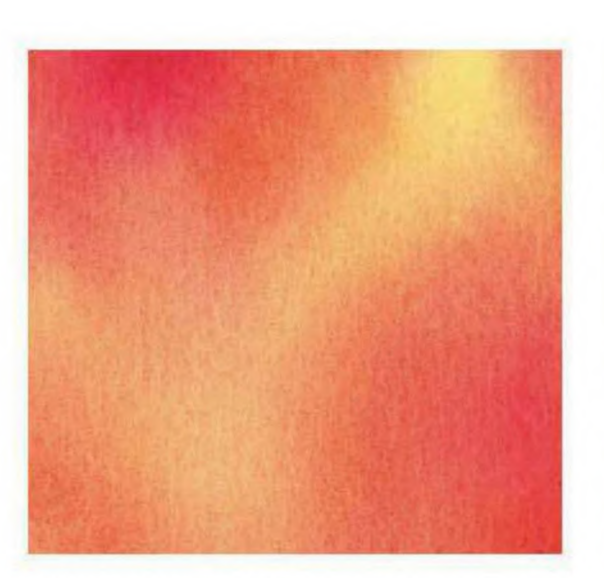
GLAZING Apply a wash, let it dry, and then apply another wash with a different color. Overlaying transparent washes of color creates beautiful, luminous blends.



FLAT WASH For large areas of solid color, load the brush and apply the color in sweeping horizontal strokes. Overlap each stroke so they blend seamlessly.



GRADUATED WASH Apply the color just as you would a flat wash, but add more water with each successive stroke. The color will graduate from dark to light.



PAINTING WET INTO WET For subtle blending and soft transitions between colors, wet the paper first, and then add wet colors to the wet surface.



LIFTING OUT Blot wet paint with a facial tissue to create soft edges. You also can lift out dry paint with a clean, wet brush; damp sponge; or cotton swab.

Developing Form

with Joan Hansen

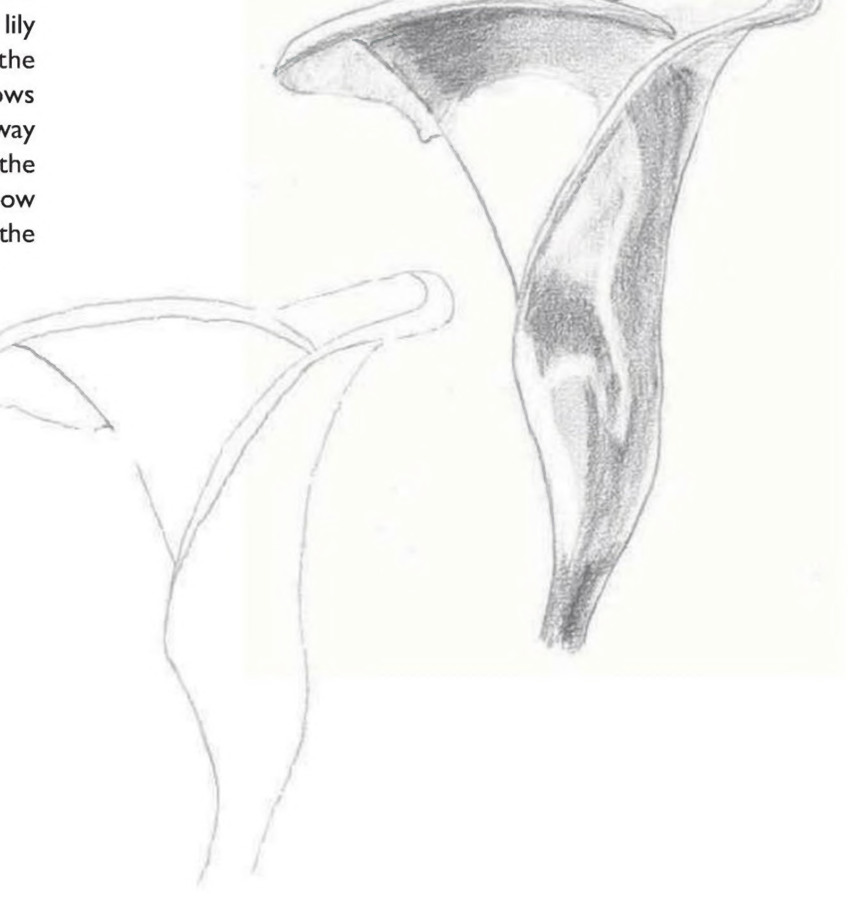
IMAGINE OPENING A DOOR from a completely dark room and walking into the brilliant sunlight. The light is so bright that at first you can't see anything. Then, as your eyes adjust to the light, you begin to see your surroundings. In a way, when I paint in watercolor, I start from brilliant light—the paper—and develop my subject by "painting away" some of the light. And it's exciting to see a lifelike, three-dimensional form emerge on a flat, two-dimensional piece of paper. The way I do that is by developing the forms of flowers using a range of different values of color.

Color Palette

aureolin yellow, burnt sienna, burnt umber, cadmium orange, cadmium yellow, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, mineral violet, permanent magenta, phthalo blue, phthalo green



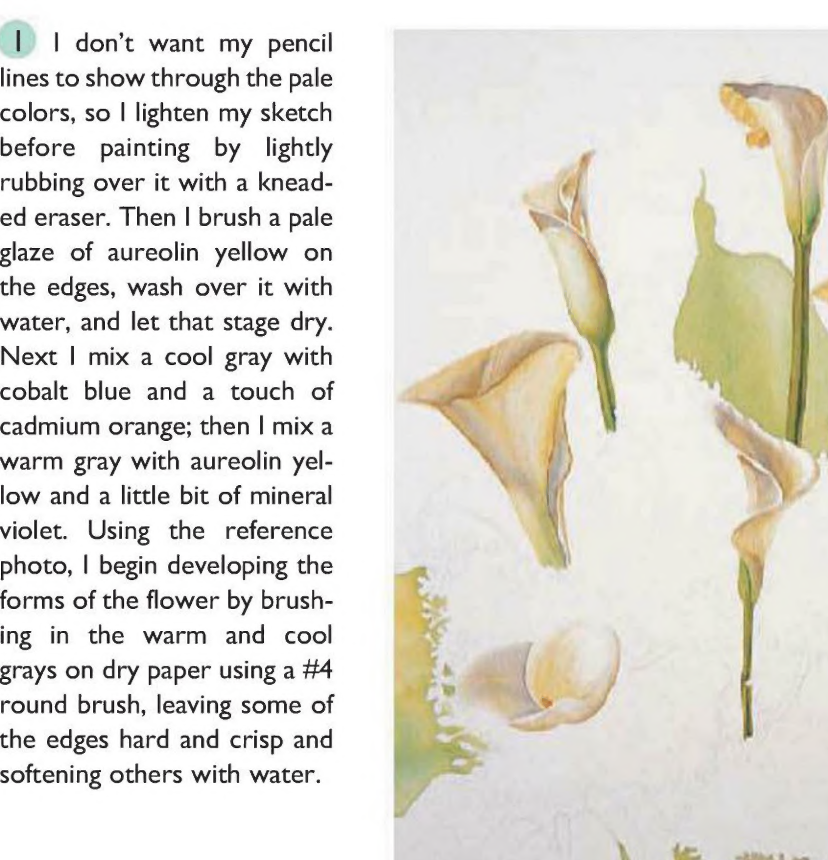
► **ASSEMBLING REFERENCES** I chose white calla lilies for my painting and grouped them with purple lilacs. The dramatic lighting I used for these photos helps illuminate the delicate calla lilies and provides a strong contrast between light and dark values. The use of deep variations and subtle gradations of light and shade in a painting is referred to as *chiaroscuro*.



► **MOVING FROM SHAPE TO FORM** The line drawing of the calla lily delineates its shape; the shaded illustration shows its form. Look at the way the cast shadows follow the contour of the flower. Now look at the calla lily in the painting. In addition to value changes, warm colors in the sunlit areas and cool colors in the shadows help define its form.

Painting the Lights and Darks

Value is the term used to describe the relative lightness or darkness of a color (including black). And it is the variation among lights and darks that creates the illusion of form. I've already painted ranges of values in my flower studies, but here I'll use this arrangement of white calla lilies to demonstrate how many different values you can see, even in something apparently colorless. But before you start painting, look at the flowers in the reference photos (above) in terms of their values. Squint your eyes, and really pay attention to all the lights and darks. Then look at the different values in the objects in the room around you or in the flowers in your garden. The more you look, the more you'll see, and the better your paintings will be!



1 I don't want my pencil lines to show through the pale colors, so I lighten my sketch before painting by lightly rubbing over it with a kneaded eraser. Then I brush a pale glaze of aureolin yellow on the edges, wash over it with water, and let that stage dry. Next I mix a cool gray with cobalt blue and a touch of cadmium orange; then I mix a warm gray with aureolin yellow and a little bit of mineral violet. Using the reference photo, I begin developing the forms of the flower by brushing in the warm and cool grays on dry paper using a #4 round brush, leaving some of the edges hard and crisp and softening others with water.

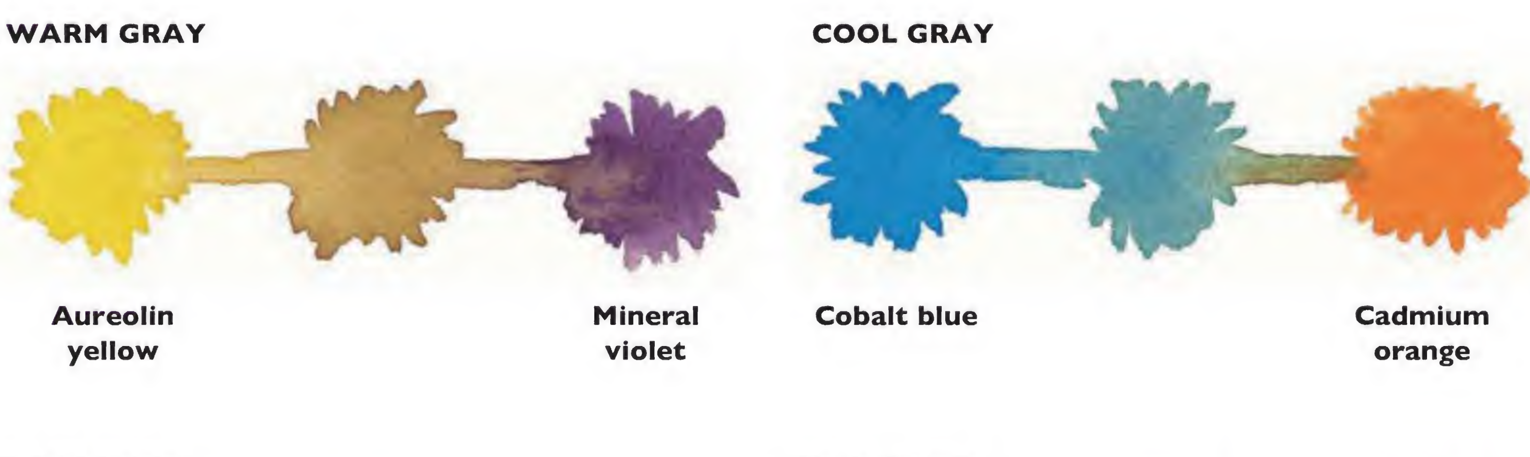


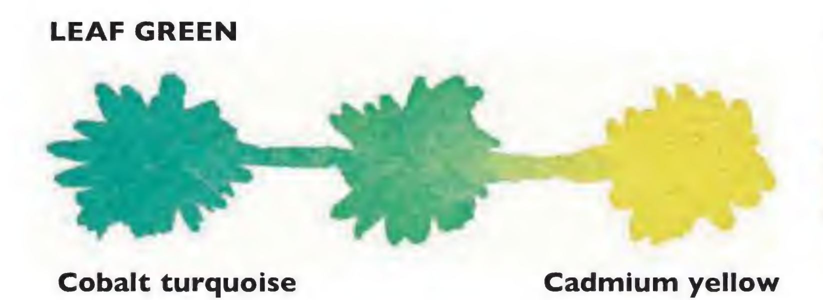
2 For the leaves, I wash mixes of yellow-green and blue-green and let this layer dry. Using a darker value of blue-green, I paint the folds in the leaves with #8 and #4 round brushes, washing over the edges with water to create a soft transition between values. I add more cerulean blue and cobalt turquoise to the lilac leaves. Then I decide to paint out the stem in the foreground. I wet the area with clear water and soften the line with a small stiff brush. When dry, I paint over it with greens.



3 I establish the basic form of the lilacs by wetting the shape with clear water and washing in light values of blue, mauve, and purple, keeping the very lightest values toward the light source. After this area dries, I pencil in some petal shapes. Then I paint the negative space (see page 22) between the petals with darker values of blue and purple. Notice that I don't try to paint every petal on these flowers; I just give the suggestion of some petals by using a range of light and dark values.

4 Now I really pump up the contrast of values by painting in a very dark background of grayed colors used in the composition. I use burnt umber and burnt sienna to gray phthalo green, phthalo blue, permanent magenta, and mineral violet. When the flowers are dry, I paint around them, alternating colors. This gives me a very dark but dynamic background. I use small round brushes next to the flowers and leaves to keep the edges clean, and I use a 1" flat brush to paint the larger areas. You may want to start by painting the smaller negative spaces (see page 22) around the flowers to gain more experience painting and changing the background colors; then paint the larger areas. After the painting dries, I erase any visible pencil lines.







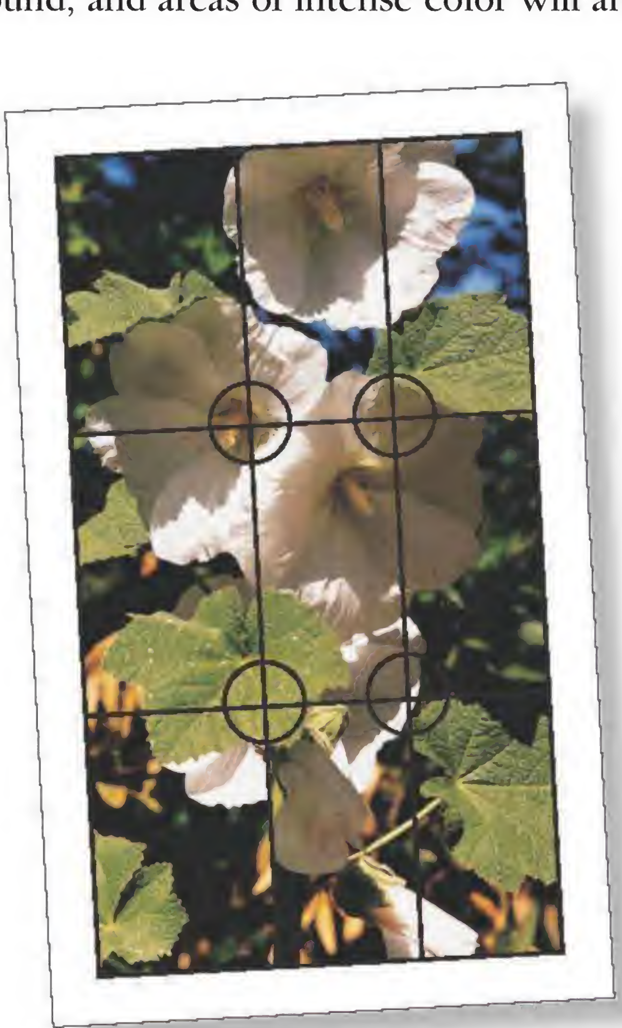
Composing a Pleasing Design

with Joan Hansen

COMPOSITION IS SIMPLY the organization of objects in a harmonious design, and a good composition is eye-catching and dynamic. To start, I choose a format that fits my subject (see page 28). Then I establish a *focal point*, or center of interest, and I create a visual path that leads the viewer's eye toward the focal point.

Leading the Eye

There are several ways to lead the eye through a painting. One method is to use curving lines to lead the eye to the center of interest. Another is to create strong contrasts of light and dark values that draw the eye in toward the focal point, as I have done in this painting of hollyhocks. As you compose your paintings, also keep in mind that light-valued flowers will stand out against a darker, less detailed background, and areas of intense color will always draw more attention.



▲ **PLACING THE FOCAL POINT** I try to avoid placing the focal point directly in the center of the paper; that makes the composition stagnant and boring. Here the sunlit hollyhocks sit high in the upper center portion of the photo—and in my painting. When planning a composition, I draw a plot of my chosen format to determine where I should place the focal point. I sketch the outline and divide it into thirds horizontally and vertically. Then I draw circles where the lines intersect. These are the areas that will make good placements for the center of interest. For the hollyhock painting, I added a humming bird in one of the areas of interest to give the eye another place to go.

Color Palette

burnt sienna, burnt umber, cadmium yellow, cadmium yellow pale, cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, mineral violet, permanent magenta, phthalo blue, phthalo green, ultramarine blue, white gouache, yellow ochre



1 After completing the drawing, I mask out the veins in the leaves. Then I wet each leaf with clear water and charge in cadmium yellow, cobalt turquoise, ultramarine blue, mineral violet, and a mix of phthalo green and burnt sienna, letting all the colors blend naturally. When this stage is dry, I add darker values of the same colors and soften them with clear water. When completely dry, I remove the mask and stroke on a glaze of yellow-green over the veins.



2 Next I paint the flower stamens with dots of cadmium yellow pale, yellow ochre, and burnt sienna, softening the edges with clear water and letting them dry. Then I wet one petal at a time and add cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, and mineral violet for the petal separations and cast shadows. I add yellow ochre for the folds in the flower centers and soften all the edges. Notice that I keep the values very light for the strongly sunlit areas.

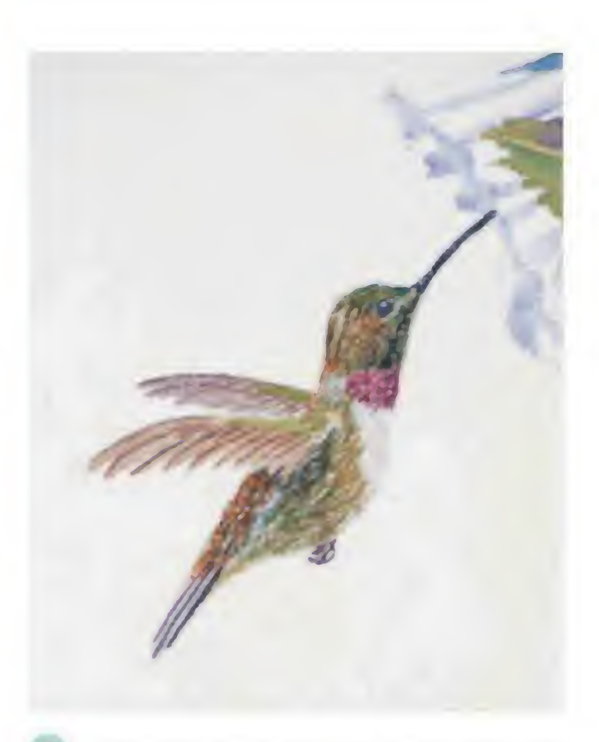


3 I finish building the forms of the flowers, keeping the lighter values on the overlapping portion of the petals and the darker values underneath. Then I paint the hummingbird (see page 11) and mix a variety of warm and cool colors (see page 18) for the background. Starting from the bottom and working my way up, I wet the paper almost up to the edges of the petals and leaves. Then I charge in the background colors with a round brush, carrying the colors to the dry edges of the flowers and bird.

HUMMINGBIRD



1 For this tiny bird, I used a very small round brush (#0). I mixed a black from phthalo blue, burnt umber, and mineral violet for the beak, eye, chin, tail, and feet (in the next step). Then I highlighted the beak and eye with white gouache (see page 15).



2 Working from back to front with tiny strokes, I layer burnt sienna and a warm green, varying the placement of my strokes. I use mineral violet and permanent magenta on the throat and add gray strokes (watery black) on the breast.



3 After the first layer of color dries, I add the detail with the second layer of feathers and fine lines. I let the bird dry before painting the background around it, stroking just up to the edges, as I do for the flowers and leaves.

4 To finish, I add some darker values for contrast. This painting has all the elements of a good composition: the format fits the subject; the focal point is off-center; and the viewer's eye is drawn into and around the painting but always toward the center of interest.

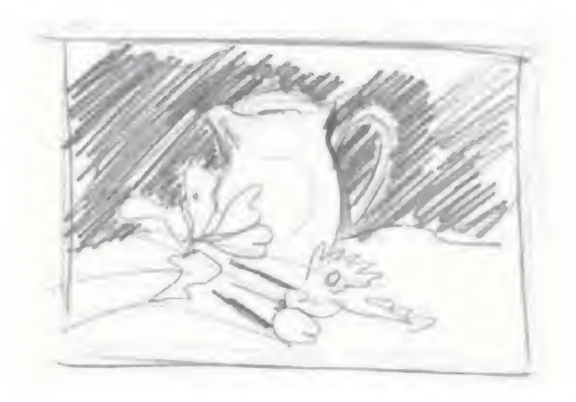
Setting Up a Still Life

with Geri Medway

PAINTING A STILL LIFE is a long-established practice in art, and with a good reason: you have complete control of your subject! You get to choose the objects you want to include, the way they're arranged, and how to light them. Although they consist of inanimate objects, as long as you follow the rules of good composition (see page 10), your still lifes will have movement and vitality!



◀ **WORKING FROM PHOTOS** When your composition contains anything that might wilt or spoil, like the cut flowers out of water shown here, it is best to paint from photo references.

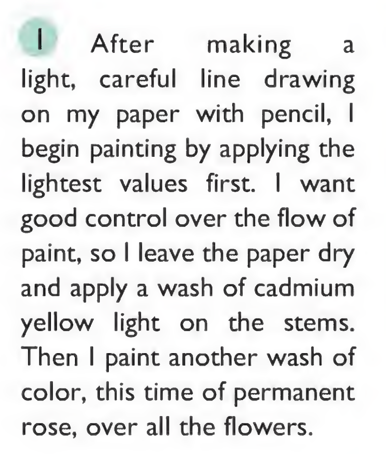








SKETCHING I tried sketching a variety of formats (vertical and horizontal) and taking different viewpoints (looking up or down at the setup).



Color Palette

cadmium yellow light, indigo blue, permanent rose, phthalo blue, sap green, ultramarine blue



1 After making a light, careful line drawing on my paper with pencil, I begin painting by applying the lightest values first. I want good control over the flow of paint, so I leave the paper dry and apply a wash of cadmium yellow light on the stems. Then I paint another wash of color, this time of permanent rose, over all the flowers.



2 Once my initial washes dry completely, I paint a wash of sap green mixed with phthalo blue over the yellow stems to begin to establish the darker areas. I also layer two more washes of permanent rose to darken some areas on the daisies, allowing each layer to dry before painting the next.



3 The porcelain pot is primarily white, so I define its shape by painting the shadows with ultramarine blue—the same color I used to put a first wash on the irises. When that layer dries, I apply a second wash of ultramarine blue on both the pot shadows and the irises, to deepen the values and further develop the forms.

Composing a Still Life

Some still lifes just happen—you look at objects on a mantel, windowsill, or table and paint what is there. I prefer arranging my own still life with objects that mean something to me or are related to one another in some way. One method I use to compose a still life is to try out different placements of objects in several thumbnail sketches, making sure the composition never looks overly heavy or barren in any one area. A more hands-on method—and one that is just as effective—is to put all the items on a table and start moving them around, changing the light source, until I find an arrangement that shows off the subjects well and is pleasing to the eye.



Artist's Tip

Please don't be stingy with your paint. Put enough paint into the wells so you won't run out in the middle of a wash!

4 I finish *Grandma's Cocoa Pot* by painting the background shadows with several glazes of ultramarine blue with some indigo blue mixed in to darken it. I use only one brush—a 1/4" (#10) round—for this still life. This painting has a special place in my heart—the cocoa pot has been in my family for years.

Preparing the Surface

Once I've decided on an arrangement, I make a light pencil drawing of it on my watercolor paper. I try to keep the shapes fairly simple, and if I must erase, I use a kneaded eraser so I don't damage the paper. Then, using artist's or masking tape, I carefully and evenly secure all four edges of the watercolor paper to my painting surface. Taping prevents the paper from curling when I apply wet paint, and when the tape is removed, it leaves a clean, white edge on the paper. Now I'm ready to begin painting!

Starting to Paint

I usually start by applying the lightest values of my colors first (see more about value on page 8). Then I build up the forms of my subject with layers of diluted color, a standard watercolor technique called "glazing" (see page 7). Glazing is particularly good for establishing dark values, because it's almost impossible to get a true dark with only one layer of color (because the white of the paper shines through). Follow the steps on these pages to see how, working from light to dark, I gradually developed this still life with layers of color.

Using Multiple References

with Joan Hansen

ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING PROJECTS I've undertaken was to paint a series of watercolors for a medical office complex. I had a great time choosing a theme that had just the right ambiance, researching the subject for reference materials, and coordinating my color palette with the color scheme of the complex. The *Koi Water Garden* on the following page was the *pièce de résistance!*

Building an Artist's Morgue

The greatest assistance for the commissioned paintings came from my *artist's morgue*—a term that refers to a collection of photos, drawings, or other sources of inspiration. I was able to find several reference photographs that helped my research tremendously. In fact, I highly recommend that you do a little research before beginning any floral painting. Go to flower gardens or nurseries, parks, botanical buildings, zoos, museums, or any place flowers are grown and take photos. Also collect pictures from books and magazines, and save them all in a file for reference (be sure not to copy copyrighted material). Although painting flowers from life is a wonderful experience, it's not always possible; your artist's morgue will keep information handy when real flowers are not available.



Color Palette

burnt sienna, burnt umber, cadmium orange, cadmium red, cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, mineral violet, permanent magenta, permanent rose, phthalo blue, phthalo green, ultramarine blue, white gouache, yellow ochre



▲ **RESEARCHING THE SUBJECT** After meeting with the designer and deciding on the basic elements for the main painting, I chose these photographs from my artist's morgue to use as references. The cattails were growing near a lake in Wisconsin, and the koi and water lilies were in a pond in beautiful Jamaica. For an additional element, I purchased irises from a local florist shop. I roughed out my design on paper, and then drew it directly on the watercolor paper.

REEDS AND CATTAILS



1 I begin the cattails by wetting the paper and then waiting a bit so the paint won't bleed too much. With yellow ochre and a round brush, I dab the paint inside the shape, rather than stroking it on. Then I add burnt sienna and burnt umber for the shadow areas.



2 I mix several warm and cool greens in different values using yellow ochre, cobalt turquoise, phthalo green, and burnt sienna. Working one section at a time, I moisten the area and apply the colors. Then I blend the colors together by lightly brushing with a clean brush.



3 To help create the illusion of depth, I make the reeds overlap one another and use darker values on the reeds in the back. For reeds that twist and turn, I paint the lighter values first and let them dry before adding shadows.

WATER LILIES

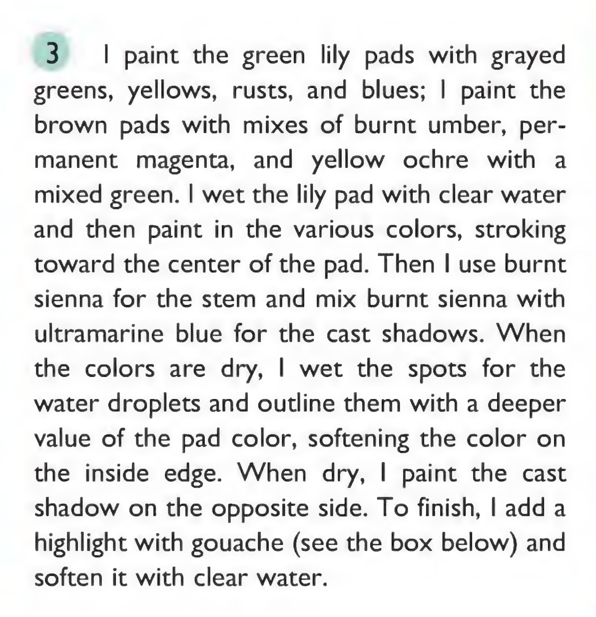


1 For the lilies, I moisten each petal and apply a light-value mix of ultramarine blue, burnt sienna, and mineral violet. Then I wash over them with clear water. When dry, I add darker cast shadows, preserving a crisp edge. For the calyx, I use values of yellow ochre and burnt umber.



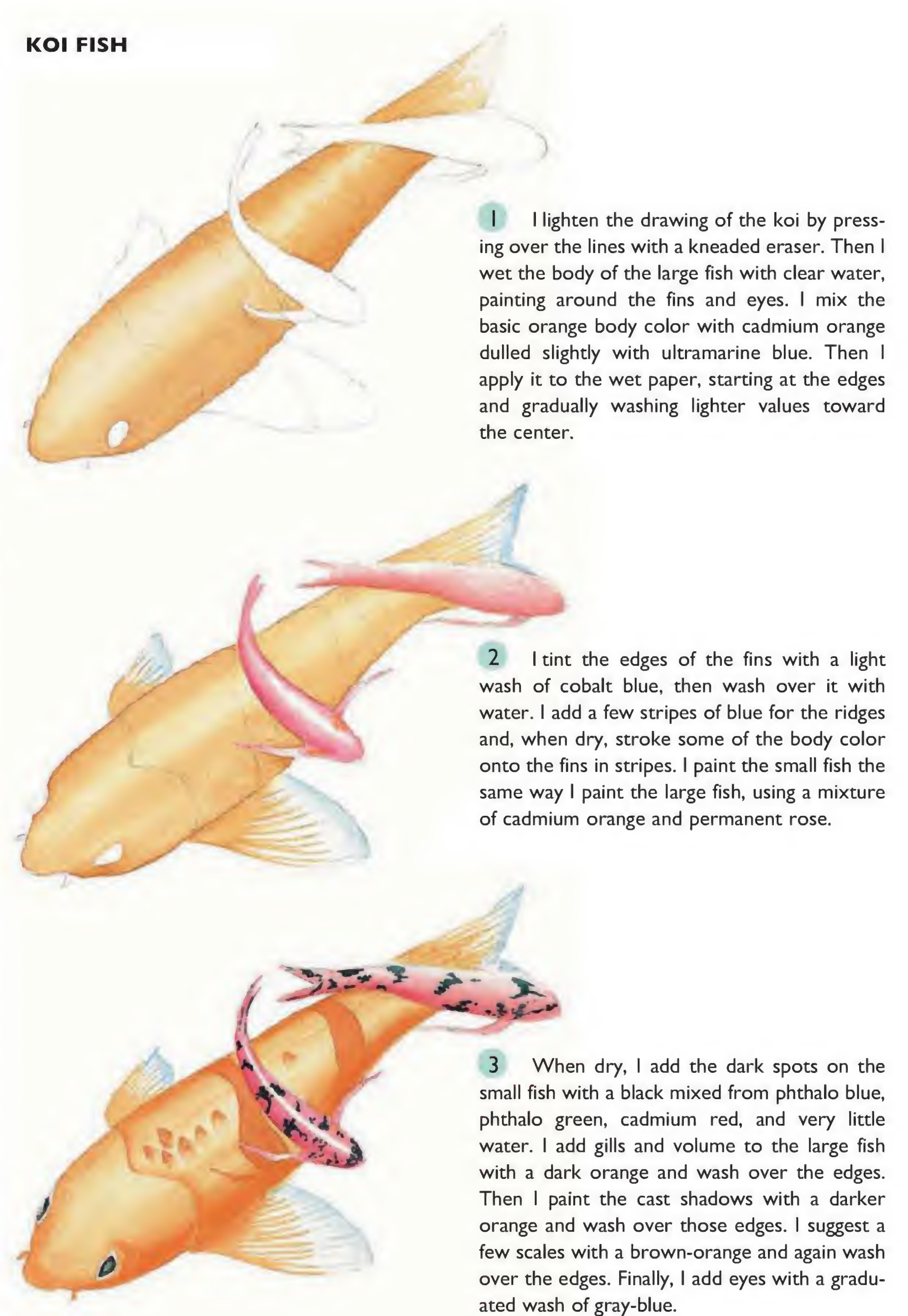
2 On white flowers, the only pure whites are the highlights; I leave the paper white there and surround the flower with color. I wet the shapes for the water and charge in a blue and purple mixture in some areas and a brown and blue mix in others, letting them blend on the paper.





3 I paint the green lily pads with grayed greens, yellows, rusts, and blues; I paint the brown pads with mixes of burnt umber, permanent magenta, and yellow ochre with a mixed green. I wet the lily pad with clear water and then paint in the various colors, stroking toward the center of the pad. Then I use burnt sienna for the stem and mix burnt sienna with ultramarine blue for the cast shadows. When the colors are dry, I wet the spots for the water droplets and outline them with a deeper value of the pad color, softening the color on the inside edge. When dry, I paint the cast shadow on the opposite side. To finish, I add a highlight with gouache (see the box below) and soften it with clear water.

KOI FISH



1 I lighten the drawing of the koi by pressing over the lines with a kneaded eraser. Then I wet the body of the large fish with clear water, painting around the fins and eyes. I mix the basic orange body color with cadmium orange dulled slightly with ultramarine blue. Then I apply it to the wet paper, starting at the edges and gradually washing lighter values toward the center.

2 I tint the edges of the fins with a light wash of cobalt blue, then wash over it with water. I add a few stripes of blue for the ridges and, when dry, stroke some of the body color onto the fins in stripes. I paint the small fish the same way I paint the large fish, using a mixture of cadmium orange and permanent rose.

3 When dry, I add the dark spots on the small fish with a black mixed from phthalo blue, phthalo green, cadmium red, and very little water. I add gills and volume to the large fish with a dark orange and wash over the edges. Then I paint the cast shadows with a darker orange and wash over those edges. I suggest a few scales with a brown-orange and again wash over the edges. Finally, I add eyes with a graduated wash of gray-blue.

Painting Opaquely with Gouache



After studying the water, the upper portion seems too dark to me. So, rather than starting over, I add some distant water lily pads with *gouache*—an opaque white watercolor paint that I mix with the transparent watercolors. (Never mix gouache on your watercolor palette: it easily can contaminate the watercolors.) When the base color of the water is dry, I paint several small, different-colored water lily pads over the water reflections. Then I paint a small shadow under the portion of the pad closest to me to add depth.



UNDERWATER ROCKS I paint a light, wet-into-wet wash of grayed blues, browns, greens, and purples and let it dry. Then, with darker values of the first wash, I paint the shadowed edges of the stones and wash over them with clear water. Then I build up the values and add dark crevices between the rocks. Next I dip an old toothbrush in paint, tapping against the brush handle to "spatter" paint over the rocks. When dry, I glaze over the rocks with the colors I use for the water to make the rocks look submerged.



KOI WATER GARDEN This is the finished piece I painted on commission. Practice the techniques from the previous pages, and use this as an inspiration for your own koi pond painting!



Mixing Luminous Colors

with Joan Hansen

HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT COLORS seem more subdued at twilight and become brighter during the day? All the colors we see are affected by the amount of light they receive, and this in turn affects the feeling a scene evokes. As the artist, I can decide to paint a flower in brilliant sunlight or in restful shade. To use color effectively, you need to learn only a few basics of color theory.

Discovering the Elements of Color

Hue means the paint color itself, such as red or blue. Its *intensity* is its strength, from its pure state to one that is grayed or diluted. Variations in values create depth (see page 8). Color *temperature* refers to how warm or cool a color appears. Afternoon colors are warm—reds, yellows, and oranges—and they tend to pop forward. Morning colors are cool—blues, greens, and purples—and they often appear to recede. Notice how important value and temperature are in the following examples and in the final hibiscus painting on the opposite page.



► **EXERCISING ARTISTIC LICENSE** I liked the play of light in this photo, but the color seemed rather bland. I decided to use my *artistic license*—my prerogative to paint what I want instead of exactly what I see. I changed the color from white to vivacious warm reds. Using *analogous colors*—those next to each other on the color wheel—gives my painting a sense of harmony, and the colors always stay fresh and clean.

Color Palette

burnt sienna, cadmium scarlet, cadmium yellow, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, permanent rose



WARM COLORS This warm red rose really stands out on the page. Your eye is drawn to the budding blossom, whereas the muted leaves draw much less attention. Warm colors in a painting also convey a sense of excitement and energy.

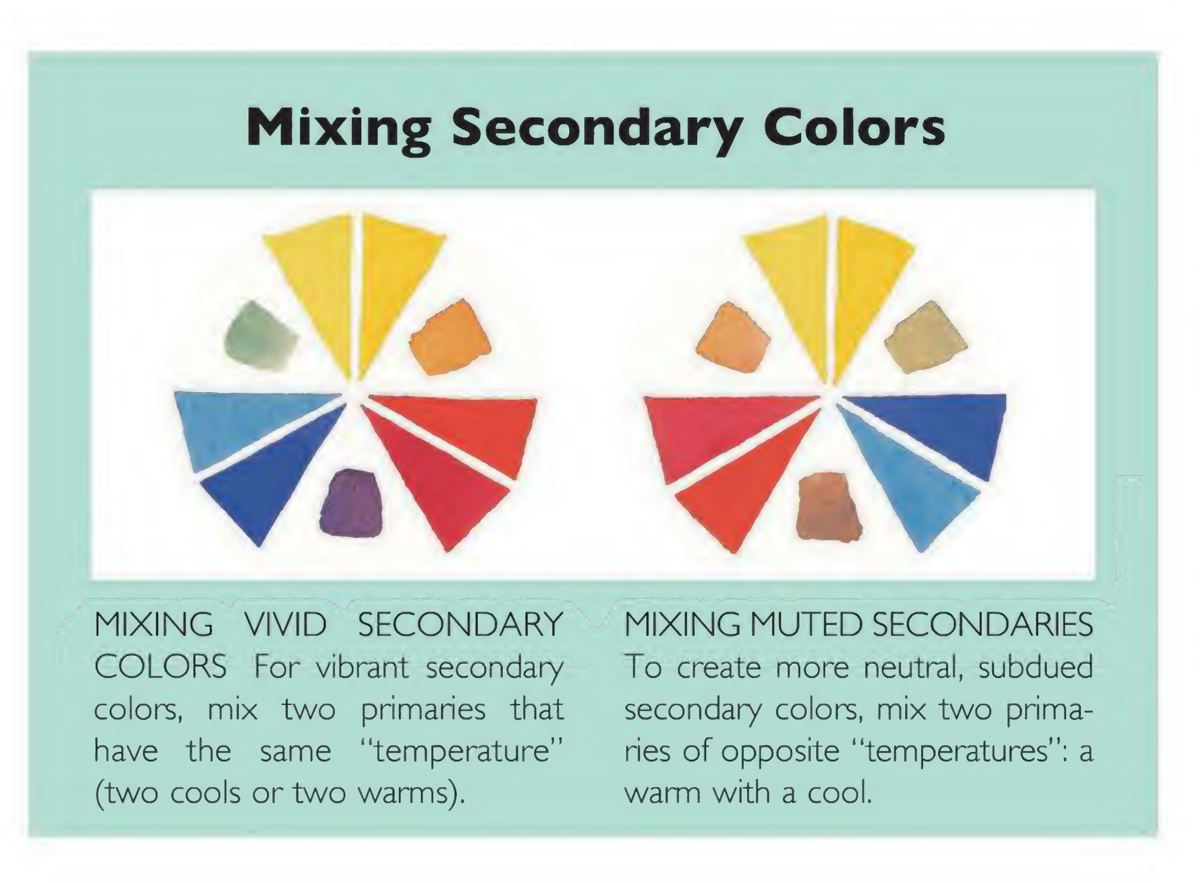


COOL COLORS This cool purple iris is more calming to the eye, in contrast to the eye-popping red rose to the left. The blue-greens in the leaves carry the cool theme even further. Keep in mind that cool colors also recede, making them good choices for background colors.



COMPLEMENTARY COLORS This orange sunflower seems to jump off the page! When placed next to each other, *complementary colors*—those opposite each other on the color wheel, like orange and blue—enliven each other, and they always make a striking painting.

Mixing Secondary Colors



MIXING VIVID SECONDARY COLORS For vibrant secondary colors, mix two primaries that have the same "temperature" (two cools or two warms).

MIXING MUTED SECONDARIES To create more neutral, subdued secondary colors, mix two primaries of opposite "temperatures": a warm with a cool.

► **USING A COLOR WHEEL** A color wheel provides a visual reference for studying the relationships among colors. The three *primary colors* (red, yellow, and blue) are the only colors that can't be created by mixing other colors together; nearly any other color can be mixed from some combination of the three primaries. When you mix two primaries in equal parts, you create a *secondary color* (purple, green, and orange).





4 Now I get to play in the “mud”! Because I want the flower to remain the center of interest, I keep the colors clean and bright, and I emphasize the strong highlights and shadows created by the bright afternoon light. I want the background to be colorful but have less intensity, so I gray the colors. You can gray a color by mixing it with either its complement or with burnt sienna; here I make mixes of blues, greens, and the flower colors and add a touch of burnt sienna to each mix. To make the background look out of focus, I wet the area with clean water and paint in the colors, letting them blend before drying.

5 When the background is finished, I remove the masking from the stamen and paint it with light values of yellows and pinks. To make the center of the flower stand out even more, I paint deeper values of the flower colors in the area between the stamen and the petal underneath it. When the painting is fully dry, I study it with a fresh eye to see what finishing touches are needed. I add more dark values in the petals and paint cast shadows on the stems and leaves to both emphasize the shapes and integrate all the lights and darks throughout the composition. Now I'm happy with this vibrant painting!



1 After drawing the contour of the flower, I apply masking fluid to the stamen to save it for painting later. Then I wet an entire petal with clean water, leaving 1/8" between the edge of the water and the pencil outline. I charge the wet petal with cadmium yellow, cadmium scarlet, and permanent rose, rinsing the brush between colors and letting the colors mingle together on the petal. To help the colors run together, I tip the paper slightly. Then I repeat the process for the other petals, letting each one dry before painting the next.



2 Now I start showing the warm sunlight on the petals. When the first layer of color is completely dry, I lightly draw in the shapes of the cast shadows on the flower. Then I mix individual puddles of the same colors, using less water and more pigment so the colors will be very intense. For large shadow areas, I wet the shape of the shadow and then apply the colors. For smaller shadows, I paint when the paper is dry. For strong shadow areas, I leave crisp edges; on others, I wash an edge with water to make a soft transition between the values.



3 Next I apply cerulean blue to the top sides of the leaves. While the paint is still wet, I charge in yellow-green (cadmium yellow mixed with cobalt blue) and let the colors mingle together. After the first layer dries, I pencil in the veins; then I paint the spaces between the veins with darker mixtures of blue, green, and purple. I paint the bottom sides of the leaves with a yellow-green mixture of cadmium yellow and cobalt blue. Then I paint back over the leaves with a second layer of deeper values to give the leaves some dimension.

Capturing Brilliant Whites

with Geri Medway

THE ONLY TIME WHITE TRULY LOOKS WHITE is in a highlight, where the light is hitting the object directly. In other areas, white is really full of reflected colors, taking on tinges of whatever colors are nearby. So when painting a white subject, leave your paper white for highlights, and use your "artistic license" to emphasize any other color you see. If you see some pink in a white petal, really show the pink to create dazzling white flowers!



MIXING WHITES All of these colors will appear to be white in shadow areas of a painting if you place them next to a darker value for contrast.

Color Palette

alizarin crimson, cadmium orange, cadmium yellow, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, permanent rose, phthalo blue, sap green



▲ **CREATING SPECIAL EFFECTS** Here I use the technique for retrieving light values, lifting the fresh paint out of the dark center with a damp brush to create the spiky needles of the foliage. This lifting technique also can be used for painting cloudlike effects, reflective surfaces, or dandelions gone to seed, to name just a few.



1 I begin my white floral painting with thin washes of cadmium yellow to establish the lightest value areas (where the light is strongest). When that glaze is dry, I add permanent rose and a touch of cadmium orange for the darker edges, then pull away some of the color with clean water in my brush to create a gradated wash—one that "graduates" from dark to light values.



2 The shadows of the white flowers are predominantly blue, so I choose cerulean blue for my first blue glaze, knowing it will glow through the successive layers of cobalt blue and add some depth. For this glaze layer, I use flat washes for areas of even color and gradated washes where I want to show the curve of the petals.



3 The flowers really begin to take shape when I add a glaze of cobalt blue to the shadows. I choose cobalt blue because this pigment easily can be lifted if some areas need to be lightened. (See page 7 for a description of lifting color.) The cool shadows also provide a lively contrast with the warmer yellows and oranges.

4 The drama unfolds with the addition of deep greens around the flowers. I add phthalo blue to sap green, darkening the mixture with a bit of alizarin crimson. This also is where I use the handy lifting technique for retrieving light values to create the light and medium greens of the pine needle spray. Now look again at the previous step where the flowers looked very blue, and see the difference that adding a darker value makes—here the flowers look noticeably whiter!

Artist's Tip

If the value looks correct when it's wet, it's wrong! Almost all colors dry to a lighter value.

Painting Floral Details



UNDERGLOW This closeup shows where to apply the first wash for the lightest value areas. This glaze is applied to individual petals, not uniformly over the entire flower.



GLAZING Add a glaze of cerulean blue over permanent rose, creating a soft violet where they overlap. Be sure not to paint blue over the yellow, because green is not a good color for petals!



SOFTENING EDGES You don't want every petal to have a hard, outlined edge. Soften some of the edges to make them recede by running a clean, damp brush along them to draw off a bit of paint.

Playing with Light and Shadow

with Joan Hansen

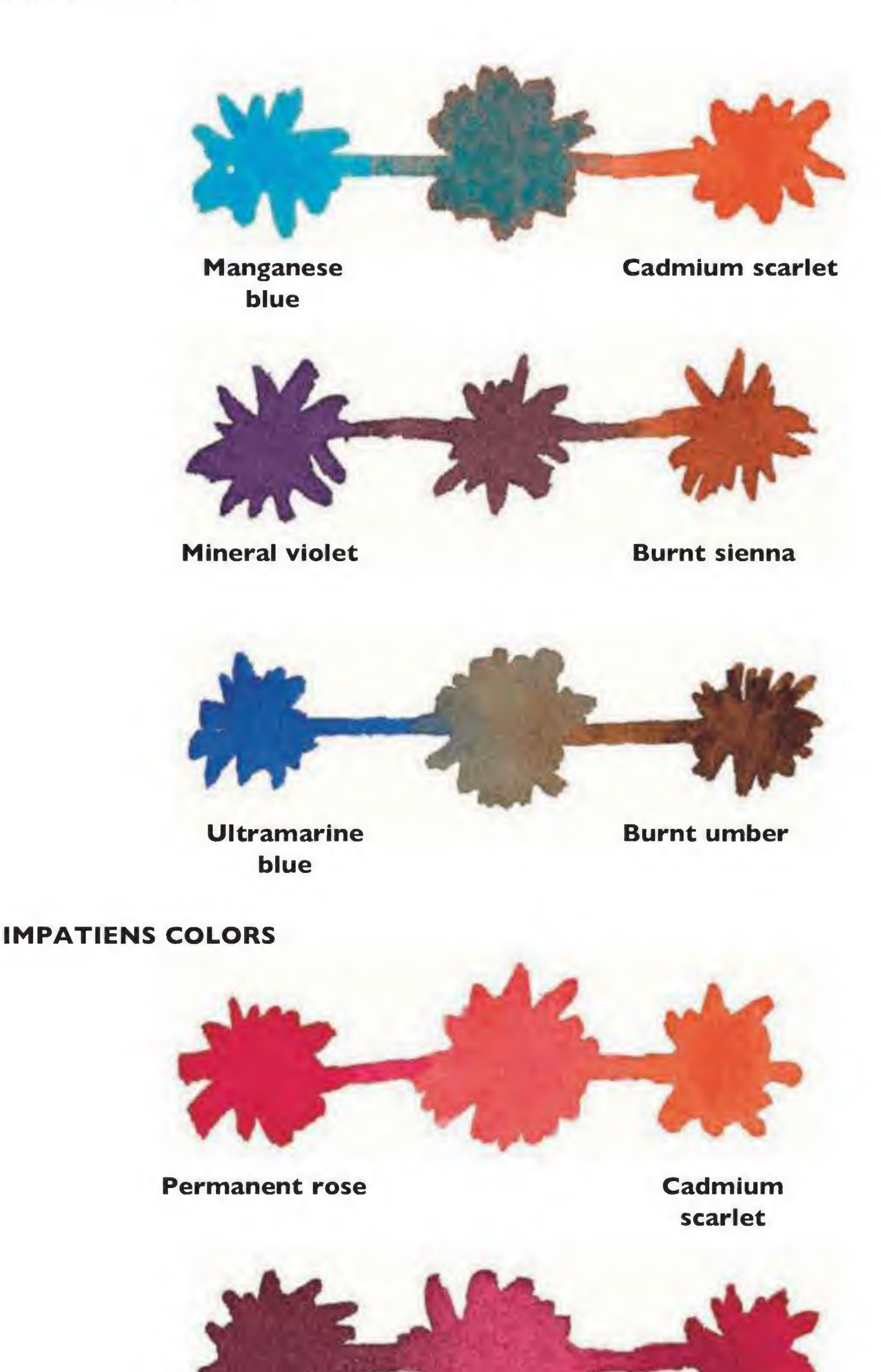
I SO ENJOY SEEING THE INTERPLAY of light and shadow on objects that I'm always eager to reproduce it in my paintings. In fact, sometimes it is the way the light hits a flower that attracts me more than the actual flower itself. When a subject is illuminated from the front, the shadows are minimal but the colors are vibrant. Light coming from behind silhouettes the subject, creating a halo effect around it, and side lighting creates dramatic shadows that are often full of fascinating negative shapes, like those in the two paintings on the opposite page.

Color Palette

burnt sienna, burnt umber, cadmium scarlet, cadmium yellow, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, manganese blue, mineral violet, permanent magenta, permanent rose, raw sienna, ultramarine blue

Using Negative Space Creatively

Just what are negative shapes? They are the shapes created by the space (*negative space*) around and between objects; the objects themselves are the positive shapes (or *positive space*). The negative space around flowers and leaves often is just as interesting as the flower itself, and the proper spacing of negative and positive shapes makes a well-balanced composition. If objects are too far apart, your composition looks scattered; too close together, and your painting seems crowded and unfocused. Notice that the negative shapes between the leaves in my iris painting are an integral part of the composition, and they frame the dramatic play of light and shadow on the leaves and rocks. A good way to test how effective your painting will be is to draw only the negative shapes instead of the objects themselves; if the arrangement is pleasing, your painting will be too.





1 After drawing the arrangement, I wet each petal in turn and then charge in cool analogous colors (see page 18) of cobalt turquoise, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, and mineral violet. Because turquoise contains yellow and violet is yellow's complement, I use the blues to "bridge" between these colors; complements become gray if they blend together. I use cadmium yellow for the stamens and raw sienna for their shadows. Then I add mid- and dark values to the petals, softening the transitions with a clean brush.

Using Light and Color to Set the Mood



Cast shadows in a floral landscape can play a major role in a painting. Use your artistic license to manipulate what you see and tailor your color palette to suit the mood you would like to convey. In this painting, I focused on the dramatic element of the play of light and shadow on the path. I also used warm tones to create a lively and active scene.



2 I begin with a cadmium yellow glaze on the stems, then add darker greens to the shadows, letting the colors blend. I wet the leaves and paint them with light and dark greens. Then I wet the rock shapes and apply mixes of manganese blue with a touch of cadmium scarlet, ultramarine blue grayed with burnt umber, and mineral violet grayed with a little burnt sienna. For the foreground flowers, I paint abstract shapes with permanent rose and mixes of permanent rose and cadmium scarlet, leaving some white spaces. When dry, I add another layer of darker values of the same colors.



3 I want crisp edges on the cast shadows in the rocks, so I wait until the paint is dry and add darker values of the three gray mixes, painting each mix individually. As I paint the rock shadows, I always keep in mind that the light is coming from high on the left and slightly behind the flowers. If my shadows aren't consistent, my painting won't be believable. Now I have all the positive shapes painted; the next step is to paint the negative shapes. Using a mixture of grayed tones from the other elements in the painting, I wet each section of the background with clear water and then glaze on the colors.

4 Now I step back to assess the results. I decide that the shadows are too dark and the foreground impatiens are too bright; they distract my eye from the irises. To correct the rocks, I make a stencil of their shapes out of clear acetate and place it over the rocks. I dip an old toothbrush in clear water, tap it off on a paper towel, and brush along the edge of the rocks over the shadow color. When the color is loosened, I lift it up with a clean facial tissue. To loosen the bright colors on the foreground flowers, I brush over the entire area with the toothbrush, lifting off the color with a clean facial tissue. While the color is still wet, I work in some more darks to bring the values of the rocks and foreground flowers closer together. This way the eye is not stopped by the vivid colors in the impatiens, the rocks and flowers become more of a single unit, and the eye is led through the dark shadows and up toward the irises.

Creating a Floral Landscape

with Joan Hansen

INCORPORATING ELEMENTS of the environment can add interest to a floral composition and highlight the vibrant colors of flowers. Sometimes I like to capture a quiet corner in a garden or a sparkling seaside dotted with spring blossoms. I enjoy the challenge of creating the illusion of space and depth by overlapping objects and varying color, values, and size. But the floral elements in the scene allow me to maintain a sense of intimacy in a wider landscape setting.

Focusing on the Foreground

You can showcase a particularly striking plant by zooming in on one or two blooms, as I have done with these colorful birds of paradise. Focus attention on the flowers by placing them in the extreme forefront of your composition, and use warm, vivid colors to make them "pop" forward. In this painting, I also contrast the intense colors of the foreground blossoms with the cool, muted shades of the cast shadows and less detailed background flowers. The marked differentiation in both detail and color makes the birds of paradise truly the center of attention.



1 After I sketch my scene, I begin painting my focal point, the large foreground flowers. I paint the orange petals of the first flower with a small round brush and a mix of cadmium orange and touches of cadmium yellow medium and cadmium scarlet. When dry, I add a touch of burnt sienna to the mix for the shadows. Next I glaze cadmium yellow medium and then cadmium scarlet over the petals. I switch to a mix of mineral violet and cobalt blue to build up glazes for the dark values of the purple petals. Then I wet the base, where the petals originate. Working from left to right, I wash in cadmium yellow medium, cadmium scarlet, and cadmium red medium; then permanent magenta and ultramarine blue; and finally a mix of cadmium yellow medium and ultramarine blue, with more blue for the darks. When dry, I glaze dark values of the red, purple, and green near the lower edge and soften all the edges with a damp brush.



2 I finish the second flower with the same colors and techniques I used for the foreground flower. When dry, I switch my focus to the large curled leaf. I wet the surface of the leaf and then wash in a light gray-green mix of cobalt turquoise, cadmium yellow pale, and a touch of burnt umber. Using a darker value of the same color, I add shadowed lines to create the illusion of soft folds in the leaf. Then I use a damp brush to blend the edges.



3 For the split-leaf plants, I start with aureolin yellow along the edges and move on to the sunlit portions with aureolin yellow mixed with a touch of cobalt turquoise. At the outer edge, I blend the washes with a damp brush and then add a thin line of burnt sienna. Next I add darks with a mix of cobalt turquoise and a touch of aureolin yellow. I glaze the underside of the leaves with cerulean blue, painting from center vein to mid-leaf. I soften the edges of the glaze with a damp brush.



4 Alternating between purples and blue-greens from previous steps, I paint abstract shapes for the flower bed. When dry, I add darker values to break up the larger shapes. Then I start the bamboo with a mix of burnt sienna and a little ultramarine blue. When dry, I apply a darker value to the left shadow side. I begin my background by randomly painting foliage shapes with cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, and cerulean blue. I let the colors blend and lift out a few lighter spots with a tissue.



5 Using the same techniques as in step four, I complete the bamboo and the cool blue background wash. Alternating between some of the green mixtures I've used previously, I paint in some foliage shapes in the area behind the birds of paradise. Then I use a flat brush to wet the sunlit path. Working wet-into-wet, I wash a light coat of yellow ochre over the area. In the tighter spaces, I let the paper dry first to better control the spread of color.

6 When dry, I lightly sketch in the shapes of the shadows on the path with a pencil. I paint the path shadows in one continuous motion, starting at the bottom edge of the paper with a graded wash of mineral violet mixed with ultramarine blue and burnt sienna. Next I paint dark values in the foliage for cast shadows. I also glaze cadmium orange over the split leaves to make them more vibrant. Then I add a touch of orange to some of the white spaces in the flower bank. Finally, I glaze cadmium orange over the bamboo to create a sense of color harmony.



PURPLE PETALS
Mineral violet and a touch of cobalt blue



ORANGE PETALS
Cadmium orange and touches of cadmium yellow medium and cadmium scarlet



ORANGE PETAL SHADOWS
Cadmium orange, cadmium scarlet, and touches of cadmium yellow medium and burnt sienna

Color Palette

aureolin yellow, burnt sienna, burnt umber, cadmium orange, cadmium red medium, cadmium scarlet, cadmium yellow medium, cadmium yellow pale, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, cobalt turquoise, mineral violet, permanent magenta, ultramarine blue, yellow ochre



CURLED LEAVES
Cobalt turquoise, a little cadmium yellow pale, and a touch of burnt sienna



LEAF HIGHLIGHTS
Aureolin yellow and a touch of cobalt turquoise



LEAF SHADOWS
Cobalt turquoise and a touch of aureolin yellow



PATH SHADOWS
Mineral violet, ultramarine blue, and burnt sienna

Zooming in on Your Subject

with Caroline Linscott

A COMPELLING PAINTING doesn't have to include many elements. Sometimes highlighting a single subject, like the close-up of a sunflower here, can create a dynamic composition and convey a mood. The various shapes, textures, and values of the flower's petals, seeds, and leaves provide plenty of visual interest!

Creating Harmony with Color

The colors used in this painting are analogous (see page 18). But the similarity of the colors doesn't produce a flat, uninteresting scene. Instead it creates a sense of unity and harmony that is difficult to achieve with high-contrast subjects. This painting illustrates how to vary the values within a group of cool colors to evoke a sense of stillness and quietude.

Color Palette

burnt sienna, cerulean blue, lemon yellow, permanent magenta, ultramarine blue, yellow ochre



1 I begin by planning out my painting with a simple, rough pencil sketch of the flower and leaves. I place the sunflower in the upper right portion of the page so that the focal point is slightly off-center. Notice how the diagonal lines of the stem and leaves lead the viewer's eye through the composition and towards the center of interest (see page 10). I remember to use a light touch when drawing on watercolor paper; I want pencil lines that will erase easily when I've finished painting, without leaving behind any grooves. Once I'm satisfied with my sketch, I begin laying in the color.



2 I wet the petals, working clear water deep into the paper. Then I use a round brush to apply watered-down lemon yellow to each petal, working from the inside edge out. I leave some areas white for highlights. While the petals are still wet, I use a lemon yellow and yellow ochre mix to shape the base and center of each petal. I let the paper dry completely; then I mix yellow ochre and burnt sienna for the spaces between the petals, using less water and more pigment under some of the petals to create depth. I rinse my brush, blot it on a paper towel, and then blend the areas I've just painted until I achieve smooth transitions of color.



3 When dry, I use a mix of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and permanent magenta to add shadows. Then I wet the area around the outer edge of the flower's center, but leave the middle dry. I apply both yellow ochre and a mix of lemon yellow and yellow ochre around the dry center, using less water to create rich, dark colors. I gradually add a mix of magenta and lemon yellow and a mix of burnt sienna, magenta, and ultramarine blue to darken the colors near the base of the petals. I use even less water where the petals meet the center. I sprinkle salt on the center while it's still damp, then gently brush it away when the paint dries for a mottled seed texture.



4 Now I finish the center. I start along the center's edge with yellow ochre and a mix of lemon yellow and yellow ochre, as in step three. Then I add a green mix of ultramarine blue and lemon yellow at the very center. I mix burnt sienna, magenta, and ultramarine blue to paint a dark rim where the center meets the petals, separating the two sections visually. While the paint is still damp, I sprinkle salt over the middle. When dry, I carefully brush away the salt to reveal the textured area.



5 Now I wet the undersides of the large, curling leaves, and then I stroke a graded wash of lemon yellow mixed with cerulean blue along the outside edges, working from the darker outside edge of the leaf toward the lighter center. While the leaf is still wet, I darken the center with a mixture of lemon yellow and ultramarine blue. Next I wet the smaller leaves and paint them in the same manner, working from light to dark. I also wet the stem and start painting it with the lemon yellow and cerulean blue mix, and then I add a dark green mixture of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and ultramarine blue to the underside.

6 Once the undersides of the curled leaves are dry, I wet the top of each leaf. Then I work in varying values of green, from the lightest (lemon yellow and cerulean blue) to the darkest (yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and ultramarine blue). While the paint is still damp, I drag the tip of the handle of my brush through the leaf to scrape out color and create veins. If the paint is very wet, this technique will produce dark lines; if the paint is only damp, it will create soft white lines.



7 For the background, I work ultramarine into the area at the bottom of the paper behind the leaves. As I work up toward the top of the painting, I gradually lighten the values by using more water and less paint. In the background area at the left, I wash in a light mixture of lemon yellow and yellow ochre. While this area is still wet, I add some soft leaves in the background with a green mix of lemon yellow and ultramarine.





8 When dry, I paint over the background with a second wash of a dark mix of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and ultramarine, thinned with more water toward the bottom. Then I add a mostly transparent blue wash over the small background leaves. I let the painting dry between washes.

9 Now I apply a series of glazes over the background. I alternate between a green mix of lemon yellow and ultramarine and a deep value of ultramarine, letting the color dry between each application. Toward the bottom of the sunflower, I use very dark colors, lightening the color with water as I work upward. I let my painting dry, erase any stray pencil lines, and sign my beautiful work!

Focusing on Formats

with Barbara Fudurich

OFTEN THE SUBJECT ITSELF will determine the *format*—the shape, size, and orientation—of my paintings. For example, a horizontal format is logical for a broad landscape, whereas a vertical format is better suited for tall subjects, such as a vase of flowers. But just because your format is rectangular, that doesn't mean your painting need be. I often like to create a free-form composition—a *vignette*—that doesn't cover the entire paper. In a vignette, parts of the scene are omitted and most of the subject fades away along the edges. Although you can blur the edges of your subject evenly, creating a perfect oval, I prefer more asymmetrical designs that provide interest and a sense of movement in a composition. Here I let the subject "bleed" off the paper, balancing the painted elements with the blank areas and anchoring the subject on the page.

Color Palette

alizarin crimson, cerulean blue, cobalt blue, dioxazine purple, permanent rose, quinacridone burnt orange, quinacridone gold, sap green, ultramarine blue, vermilion, viridian green



1 I sketch out my composition on the paper, including only the parts of the scene that I want to focus on. Then I paint with the side of a very wet, large round brush to create the bougainvillea, using permanent rose mixed with a touch of quinacridone gold for the blossoms and touches of sap green mixed with ultramarine blue for the greenery. I let all the colors blend together, and then charge in the green mix here and there to break up the mass of pink. I paint all the way to the top and right edges of the paper—my first two anchor points.



2 Next I paint the arch over the door, the flowerpots, and the window ledge with a mix of quinacridone burnt orange, vermilion, and a touch of dioxazine purple. Using a damp brush, I gently soften the edge where the bougainvillea and the arch meet. I switch to a large round brush to paint the doorframe with a mixture of viridian green and a touch of cobalt blue, lightly washing the mix over the glass door on the right. Then I use a damp brush to lift out a few reflections in the glass.



3 I wash a light gray mix of vermilion, quinacridone gold, and cerulean blue over the wall, painting around the bougainvillea. I also wash over the building on the left side of the doorway, leaving the front edge white. I use the tip of the brush to apply a heavier application of gray around the doorway and window. I paint the "inside" of the building using ultramarine blue mixed with a bit of vermilion. Next I lift out a few spots with a damp brush, indicating objects inside, and then lift out some lighter reflections in the glass. With the tip of a round brush, I carry the color along the doorframe.



4 With a green mix of sap green and ultramarine blue, I add foliage to the flowerpot, extending the greenery to touch the paper's edge so it becomes the third anchor of my vignette, balancing the two points of bougainvillea that touch at the top and at right. I drop in a mix of permanent rose and quinacridone gold for flowers. Then I glaze ultramarine blue mixed with a touch of vermilion along the flowerpot to give it form and to define the edge of the building. I return to the bougainvillea, adding another layer of the red and green mixes and charging in alizarin crimson for deeper values.



5 Next I use a medium brush with a mix of quinacridone burnt orange and a bit of dioxazine purple to give definition to the archway, window ledge, and planter. Then I use a liner brush to create fine lines in the same area. I brush in foliage in the planter at right using viridian green mixed with a touch of dioxazine purple. Then, to give form to the foliage, I add more pigment to the tip of the brush and add fine lines. I also brush a mix of quinacridone orange and dioxazine purple along the side edge of the window to connect the ledge to the mass of bougainvillea so that the window isn't "floating."

6 I begin the flooring with a mix of ultramarine blue and vermilion. Then I switch to a mix of quinacridone gold, permanent rose, and dioxazine purple for the tile, keeping the outer edges soft and indistinct. While the surface is damp, I use the chisel end of my brush to scrape out grouting lines (a palette knife also will work). Because the paint is still on the wet side, the pigment will run into the grooves and create dark lines. To finish, I lift out color along the outer edge of the doors, darken the flowerpot foliage next to the building, and add a few more touches of alizarin crimson to the bougainvillea.

BOUGAINVILLEA FOLIAGE



Sap green and ultramarine blue

ARCHWAY, FLOWERPOTS, AND LEDGE LIGHTS



Quinacridone burnt orange, vermilion, and dioxazine purple

ARCHWAY, FLOWERPOTS, AND LEDGE DARKS



Quinacridone burnt orange and dioxazine purple

OUTSIDE OF BUILDING



Vermilion, quinacridone gold, and cerulean blue

INSIDE OF BUILDING



Ultramarine blue and vermilion

Depicting a Botanical Scene

with Caroline Linscott

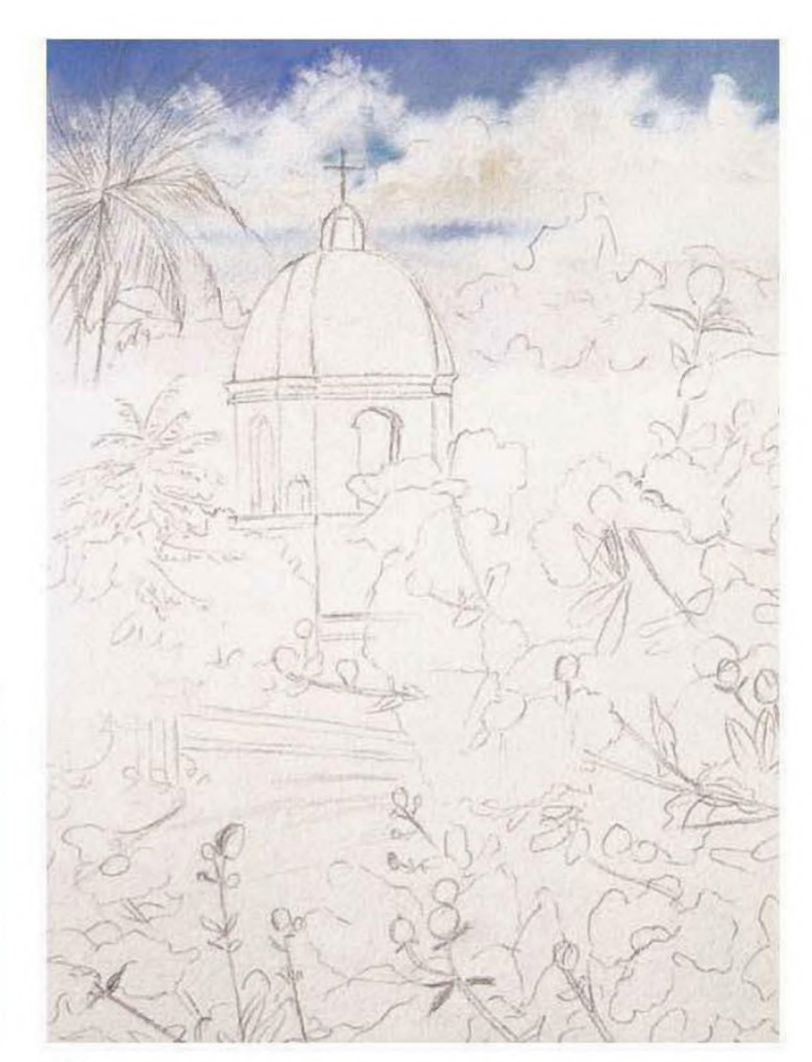
YOU CAN EXPAND YOUR painting range by focusing on more than just flowers. A scene with several botanical elements makes for a lively composition with varying colors, shapes, and textures. In addition, you can add interest and excitement to a painting when you contrast light, watery colors with dark, less diluted colors. The viewer's eye is drawn to the richer, thicker color, but the less vibrant shades and lighter values make the other colors that much more striking.

Color Palette

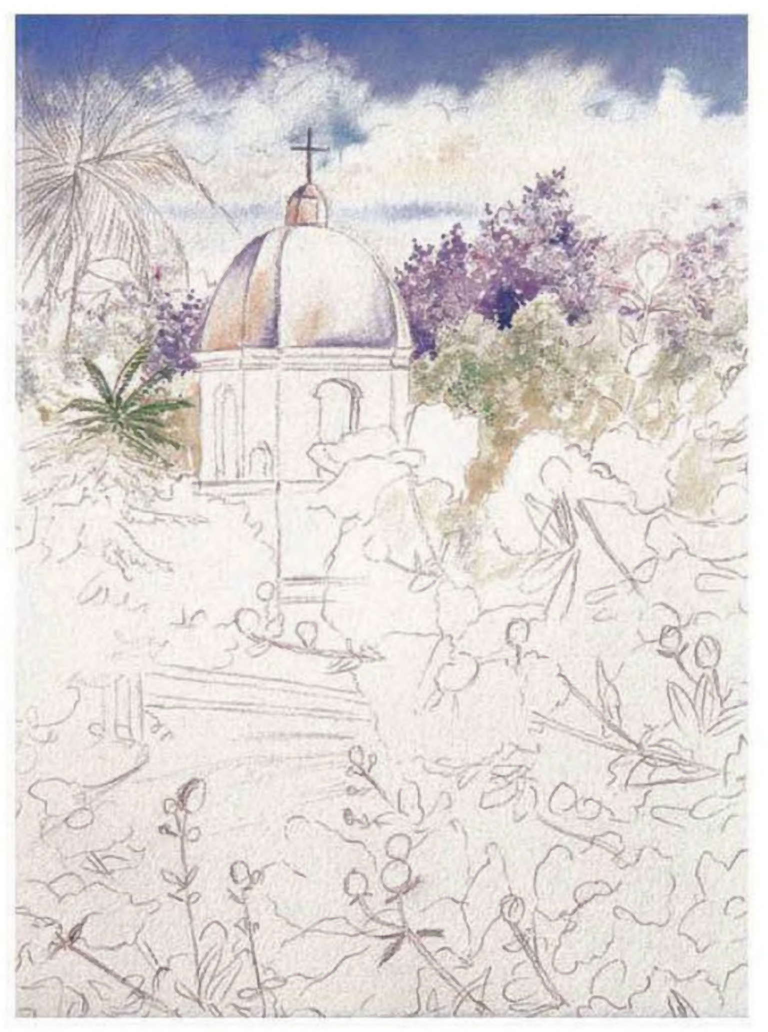
burnt sienna, cerulean blue, lemon yellow, permanent magenta, ultramarine blue, yellow ochre

Artist's Tip

To make a light-weight watercolor board for traveling or painting outdoors, cut a piece of heavy cardboard a little larger than your paper, and cover it with plastic wrap.



1 Before I begin painting, I work out the size relationships, shapes, and angles of my composition in a sketch. Then I wet the sky area, working around the building but wetting the background vegetation thoroughly. Starting at the top of the paper, I stroke in cerulean blue with a flat brush, painting around the white clouds. I rinse my brush before brushing ultramarine blue over the lighter blue, letting the colors blend on the paper. I lightly press a tissue or paper towel against the white sky to lift out some soft cloud shapes; then I soften the edges with a clean, damp brush. Next I stroke the sky colors through the clouds and behind the dome, and then I add a light wash of yellow ochre at the base of the clouds.



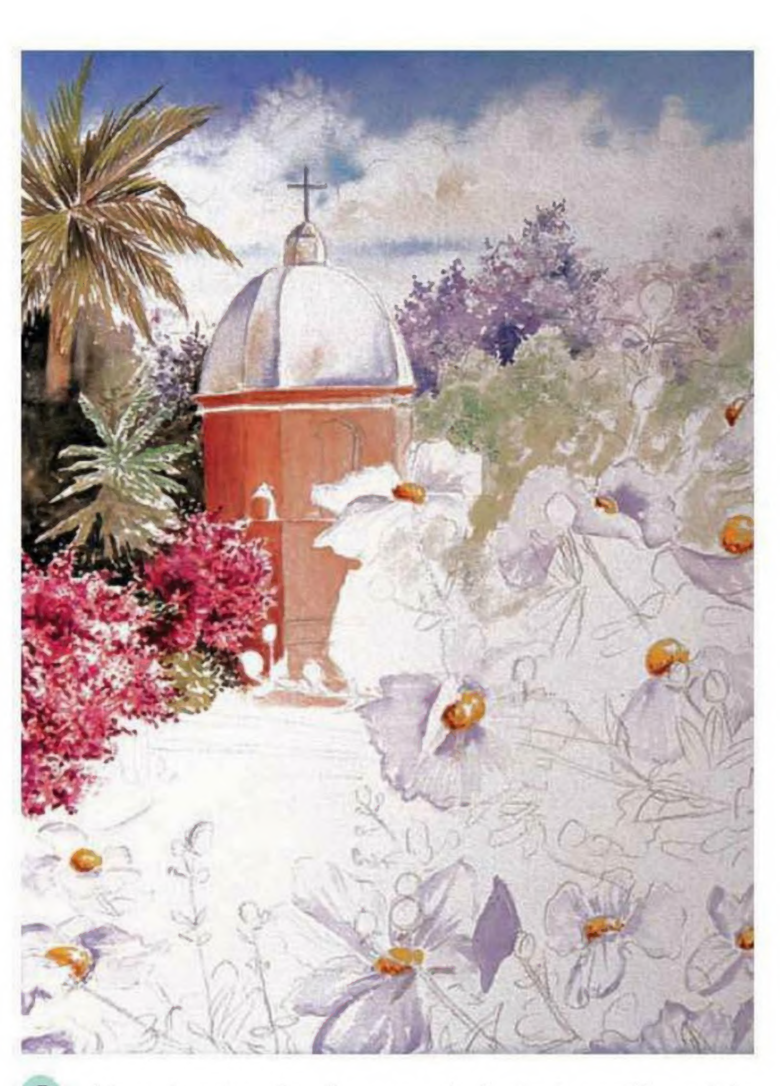
2 Now, I mix a pale yellow-green with cerulean blue and lemon yellow and lightly dab it in for the distant trees. Then I mix cerulean blue with permanent magenta and dab in the purple trees in the background. To create texture in the foliage, I use a damp sponge to dab over the trees with the yellow-green mix in a varied pattern. I sponge over the purple trees, then use my round brush to paint the palm leaves with a mix of yellow ochre and cerulean blue. Now I wet the dome and apply cool gray shadows with a diluted wash of cerulean, ultramarine, and burnt sienna. I add warm shadows with a mix of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and a touch of magenta. Then I paint the cross with the cool gray.



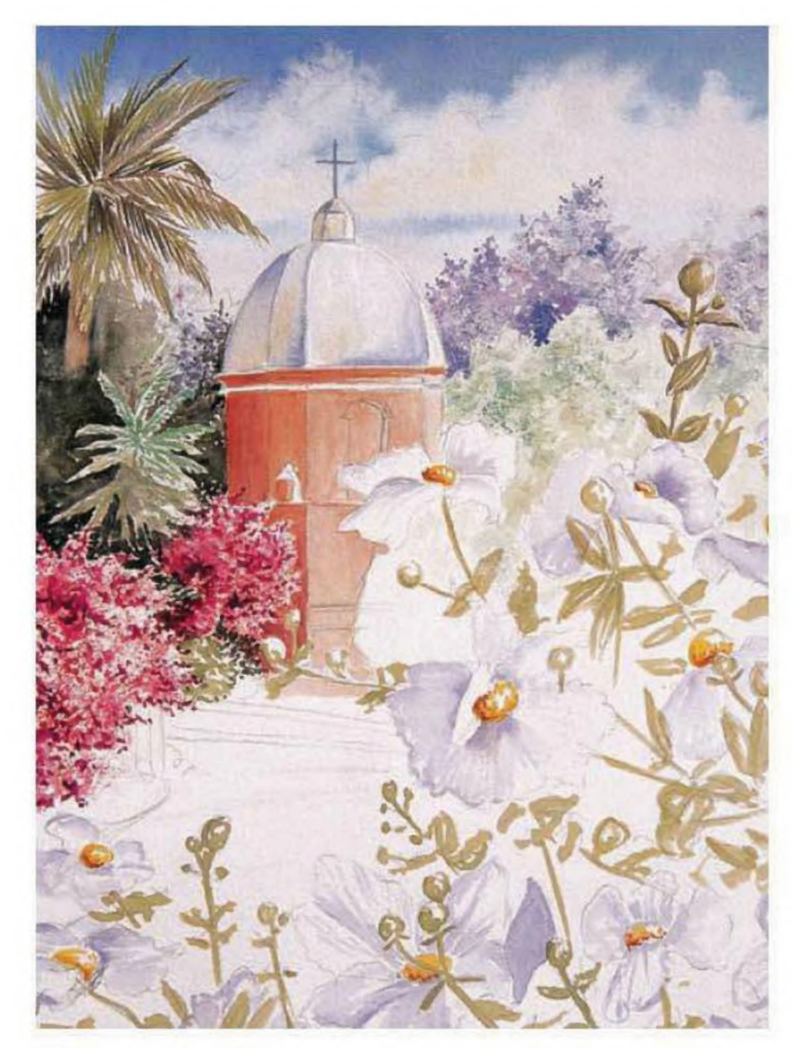
3 I paint the brick section of the depot with a mixture of yellow ochre, burnt sienna, and magenta, gradually getting lighter towards the sunlit side. Then I use a damp sponge to alternately dab magenta and a mix of magenta, yellow ochre, and lemon yellow over the red bougainvillea bushes. I turn the sponge often to vary the pattern, letting some of the white show through to give the impression of individual flowers. Next I add the bottom part of the small palm tree using a round brush and a lighter value of the green mix used for the leaves.



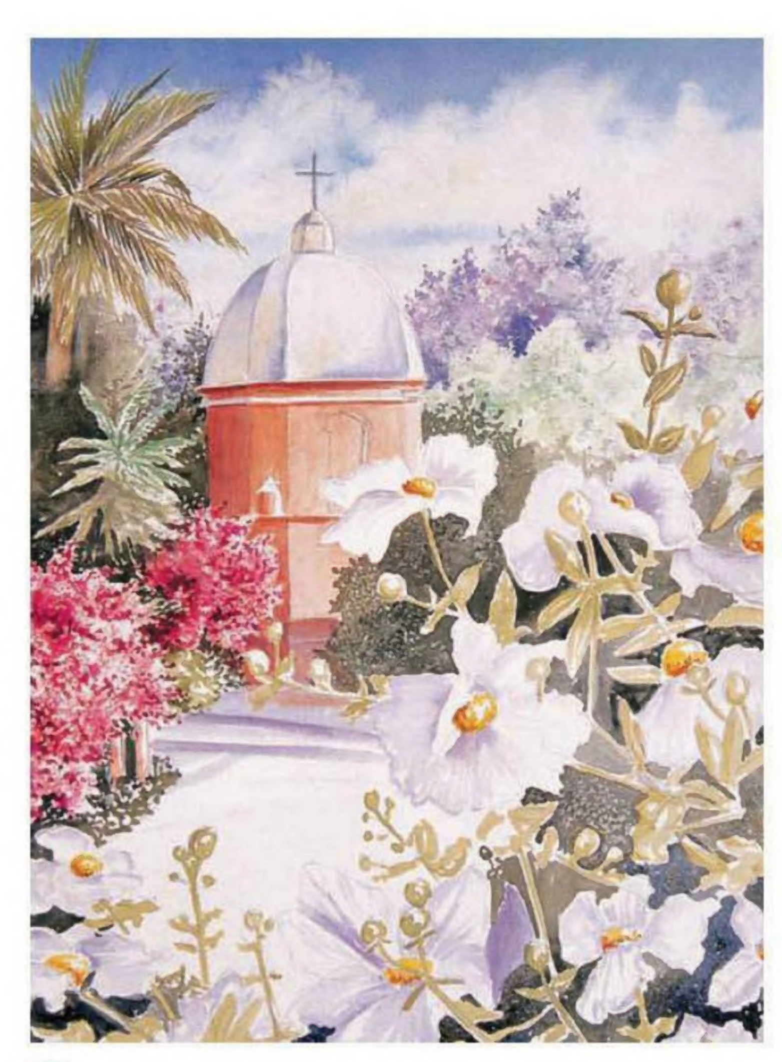
4 For the taller palm's branches, I mix a light yellow-green (lemon yellow and cerulean blue); a medium, earthy green (lemon yellow, ultramarine, and burnt sienna); and a dark, blackish green (ultramarine, yellow ochre, and burnt sienna). I alternate the greens, working from light to dark. I paint the trunk with burnt sienna, sponge in foliage shadows with the two darkest greens, and sponge in the bush in front of the bougainvillea with the earthy green. While the paint is wet, I sprinkle salt below the tall palm, and rub it off when the paint dries.



5 Now I paint the foreground, beginning with a light value of lemon yellow for the centers of the flowers, saving small white areas for highlights. Then I add a little shading with yellow ochre. I follow this with a darker shade of orange, mixed with lemon yellow, yellow ochre, and magenta. Finally, I add the darkest shadows with burnt sienna. To create shadows on the white petals, I use a transparent gray mix of cerulean blue, magenta, and ultramarine, leaving a substantial amount of white for the lightest areas of the flowers.



6 While the flower centers and petals are drying, I use a round brush to paint in the stems, leaves, and buds with medium and light values of yellow-green (a mixture of lemon yellow and cerulean blue). I make sure I save some of the white of the paper to create highlights in the sunlit areas. The muted values of these white flowers and their greenery provide a strong contrast to the bright red bougainvillea bushes and the rich color of the depot walls. This contrast draws the viewer's attention toward the eye-catching depot because the bright, warm colors "pop out" against the cool, more muted colors of the background foliage and trees.



7 With a round brush, I use the greens from step four to paint light strokes up into the background trees, creating dark shadows behind the foreground flowers. I randomly sprinkle on salt to add texture. Now I paint the posts under the bougainvillea with watered-down burnt sienna. Then, with a mix of cerulean blue, magenta, and ultramarine, I shade the posts and paint two lines for the railroad tracks. Next I apply several glazes to the shadows of the building with a darker value of the brick color. I allow each coat to dry before applying the next.

8 Now I glaze over some of the green foliage behind the flowers with a coat of the medium, earthy green. I also add some of the dark, blackish green here and there to help define the flower stems, leaves, and buds, softening any hard edges with a damp brush. I start painting the dome windows from the top down with a thick, dark mix of ultramarine and burnt sienna. About halfway down, I clean my brush, and then I paint the brick color from the bottom of the windows up. I let the colors blend where they meet to create the illusion of bricks showing through the dark windows. When the paint is completely dry, I erase any visible pencil lines and sign my painting.

Using Salt

Salt reacts to paint by pulling the color into the crystals, creating marvelous mottled effects. When the color is still wet, sprinkle on table salt or coarse sea salt. When the paint is completely dry, gently brush off the excess salt. Practice this technique first: If the paint is too wet, the salt will melt completely; if the paper is too dry, the salt won't melt enough to absorb the color.





About the Artists

Barbara Fudurich is an award-winning artist who has had her work juried into many shows, such as The Western Federation of Watercolor Societies, the annual Echoes and Visions, and the Orange County Artist Showcase. An advocate of painting on location, Barbara has traveled from her home in Southern California to the Southwest, Hawaii, and Europe.

Joan Hansen's passion for art and love of both nature and color are evident in her beautiful paintings of florals, landscapes, and wildlife. Through her company, Creative Art and Design Studio, Joan teaches art classes and workshops, gives painting demonstrations for art groups, and juries art shows.

Caroline Linscott began painting in watercolor in 1989. She teaches watercolor painting to children and adults and is very active on local art councils and in the arts community. She also served as president of Women Artists of the West for three years.

Geri Medway regularly exhibits at art festivals in Southern California, and her paintings are included in private and corporate art collections. She is a signature member of the National Watercolor Society and a juried associate member of Watercolor West.